JUNE 5, 2000

China and Globalism · William Greider

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The Nation.

School Colors

The Racial Politics of Public Education

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SPECIAL ISSUE

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LETTERS

A GORE OF A DIFFERENT COLOR

Arlington, Va.

■ I always enjoy reading Gore Vidal's "contributions" to *The Nation*, but I was very curious about something that has not been addressed so far this election year: Will Vidal go for the Triple Crown? *The Nation* should be all over this issue! Let me see if I can remember: 1960, Vidal, House, New York, humiliating defeat; 1980, Vidal, Senate, California, humiliating defeat. So what are his intentions for 2000? I would think the presidency. I would support him. And if he wins, fantastic! If he loses, well, he's got the Triple Crown. Come now, Vidal, come down from your Italian high horse and throw your hat into the ring! Triple Crown! Triple Crown! GREG GEDDES

VIDAL REPLIES

Ravello, Italy

■ At last! A "contribution" from Arlington, Virginia, a stone's throw from Langley, home to that great mother of disinformation, the CIA. Yes, I confess that I was the 1960 Democrat-Liberal candidate for the House of Representatives from New York's 29th District. Was I "humiliatingly" defeated? Even Arlington knows that I was not. Of the total vote I got 43.3 percent, while the candidate for President, John F. Kennedy, got only 38 percent from the same electorate. In that election I spent only $14,000.

In 1962, the great lords of Tammany, Buffalo and Himself of Albany offered me the nomination for Senate against the Republican incumbent, Jack Javits. I turned them down. In 1964 I was again offered the nomination for Congress in the 29th District, knowing that if I ran, I'd win. But since I no longer wanted to go to Congress, we picked a Democrat who did; and did. In the California Democratic primary for US Senate (1982), I came second in a field of nine: The state senator from Orange County was number three and the charismatic mayor of Fresno was number four. Of the lot, I spent the least—about 20 cents a head.

Apparently, Arlington has confused me with what is, no doubt, his idol, William F. Buckley Jr., who *was* humiliatingly defeated, 1,166,915 votes to 339,127 in the New York City mayoral race of 1965—unless, as one delicately attuned to the clear and present danger to everything a pro or crypto holds dear, he fears that I might just return in November and seize the, essentially, uncontested crown. GORE VIDAL

'TEPID PORRIDGE' U

New York City

■ I do not make a habit of replying to critics, and for the most part David L. Kirp's criticism of *The Knowledge Factory* is quite within the bounds of the not-worth-answering ["The New U," April 17]. But when he characterizes my proposals for undergraduate curriculum alternatives as a turn "sharply to the right," I wonder whether he has read the book carefully enough, or was his discernment blinded by my statement that Allan Bloom's critique of the contemporary curriculum had touched a nerve? In the last chapter I explicitly distance my proposals from those of Bloom and others who would soak undergraduates in the "great books" of Western Civilization, although I do argue that this flawed approach is better than the tepid porridge served up in most core curriculums. Kirp says Bloom and I differ in "some essentials—the place of Freud and Marx in the canon, for instance." In fact my differences are more fundamental. Where Bloom would revive the Great Books for about twenty universities at the pinnacle of the academic system, I propose that in the first two years all students study science, literature and philosophy in global historical contexts regardless of the position of their institution in the hierarchy.

The point is not to ossify knowledge but to historicize it, a proposition nearly all educational conservatives disdain. For example, rather than begin with Plato's *Republic*, in the manner of many adoring great books or Western Civilization courses, I propose a critical approach. To start I suggest a course in the evolution of *Homo sapiens*, then to trace the influence of Eastern thought on Plato's immediate predecessors, the pre-Socratics, and insist that Greek society be seen in a world perspective. By reading the economic and social history of societies as well as their intellectual jewels, students may understand that slavery, war and mercantile expansion are constitutive of many ideas in ancient civilizations. Moreover, I argue that much of the time Plato was in dialogue with the materialist cosmology of Milesian philosopher/scientists, a point elided by his worshipers. In fact, throughout the curriculum I try to show how science, literature and philosophy are always situated in the economic and social worlds within which they are made.

In the book I give another specific illustration: How to address Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*? This aspect of the course would be taught in relation to the influence of Marx, Freud and Sartre on Fanon's ideas as well as the concrete conditions of colonial and postcolonial African development. Did Kirp miss my prescription to study Edward Said's *Orientalism*? Gayatri Spivak's essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" and *The Colonizer and the Colonized* by Albert Memmi? Does he think these texts are in concert with Bloom's prescriptions? And did he miss that I have taught parts of this curriculum in community college, high school and in worker-education programs? If this is an example of my "right turn," I suppose I have to plead guilty. On reflection, maybe the real educational right are those who would disdain a coherent—and systemic—approach to higher learning in the name of the mantra of preparing students for jobs, jobs, jobs, a task employers have cleverly transferred to a desperate academic system that, having lost a sense of its intellectual mission, has been all too willing to fall into line behind the corporations. STANLEY ARONOWITZ

South Hadley, Mass.

■ David Kirp hits the nail on the head in his assessment of how the marketplace is warping the traditions and values of American higher education. Seeing ourselves locked in fierce competition with one another, colleges and universities are preoccupied ever more crassly with "market positioning," with the "key messages" we are sending out into the world, with how we are attracting "customers" and capital and garnering prestige. In such a world, educational aims can be less compelling than marketing ones in shaping the institutional agenda.

Not only are we ever more aggressively selling ourselves—so, increasingly, are our students. Positioning of the self is the name of the game from an early age for today's student. More and more students come to higher education with a narrowed focus on career success that, ironically, may ultimately shortchange their chances for success in life and in the workplace.

The commercialization of the academy has even spawned its own indices by which students and institutions can be easily, though erroneously, measured. The SAT, deeply flawed as a test of academic potential, has become a test that tags a student's chances of future career success, while the *US News & World Report* rankings have become a scorecard that measures the "market value" of degrees from various institutions.

Despite these trends, I believe that the antidote to problems arising from the commercialization of higher education lies within colleges and universities themselves. The academy must take care to focus on its central purposes. The chief business of the American academy is not business, but education. In my view, we must make sure that some vestiges of the ivory tower continue to exist within the fast-track, high-tech world. In fact, maintaining some distance is the best way the academy can serve the commercial, political and social interests of our society.

JOANNE V. CREIGHTON, *president*
Mount Holyoke College

KIRP REPLIES

Berkeley, Calif.

■ I agree with President Creighton: There's a place for the market in higher education, but the

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EDITORIALS

Racial Justice 101

In a presidential election year, few issues inspire more citizen anguish and less political substance than public education. This year is no exception. Although there are some important differences between the candidates—Bush likes private school vouchers, Gore wants public school choice—there's a remarkable consensus about some common buzzwords: accountability, charters, standards, high-stakes testing.

While not without meaning, these slogans are a distraction from the real challenges and problems facing public schools. Both candidates, like too many educators, are particularly eager to evade serious discussion of the subject of this special issue (initially conceived by longtime *Nation* contributor Herbert Kohl): the ways that American schools perpetuate racial and economic inequality. The racial achievement gap—for which students and their families are too often blamed—is a national civil rights scandal of many dimensions: persistent imbalance of resources between urban and suburban schools despite a decade of slow-moving lawsuits; racism embedded in educators' diminished expectations for students of color; exploitation of parents' frustration by cynical politicians.

In that last camp, put the school privateers who have spent the past decade selling Milwaukee's voucher experiment to desperate inner-city parents. Vouchers are now under consideration in twenty states, even though, as Barbara Miner (page 23) makes clear, they drain money from public schools, and there is no proof that they produce better-performing students.

But the fraught relationship between race and education also poses a profound challenge to liberal school reformers, whose own record of imposing top-down schemes is nothing to take pride in. At worst, such efforts turned into debacles like Boston's school desegregation experiment of the seventies, pitting the most impoverished black and white neighborhoods against each other while leaving suburbs safely insulated. Well-intentioned progressive educators have also given the impression of not caring about the ordinary standards by which all parents measure their children's success. As the experience of African-American parents in Montclair, New Jersey, recounted by Lise Funderburg (page 26) suggests, neither integration nor upward mobility is enough to eliminate the lowered expectations that often greet black students when they walk through the schoolhouse door.

Progressive education reform has always been about insisting on equality of aspiration. Yet the narrow reduction of "standards" to a battery of computer-scored tests has actually blocked that goal. Testing has precise, limited utility in identifying troubled schools, but high-stakes testing is now such a fetish that real teaching is being replaced by "teaching to the test," particularly in poor and minority schools. In this national cram session,

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schools' attention—as usual—goes to already high-performing students who can most easily raise a school's average and make administrators look good. Struggling students are neglected, while some low performers—disproportionately African-American boys—are relegated to the special-education track. Test cramming is also colliding with well-established classroom curriculums and discouraging the most creative and effective teachers. Worst of all, as Gary Orfield and Johanna Wald observe (page 38), states and districts that have tied promotion and graduation to student test scores are now seeing a spike in dropout rates. It's time to replace the testing fetish with redefined school performance standards that use tests as one among many measures, and that require all schools to achieve racial equity (Texas began doing that under Governor Ann Richards, although George W. Bush claims the credit).

The diverse educators and writers who speak in this special issue do not agree on everything—the forum, which continues a conversation that began at an Open Society Institute roundtable last November, airs a range of progressive views—but they do share bottom-line convictions about what really works. Schools should be small, supported by a close-knit community, responsive to the individual needs of students and respectful of the creativity of good teachers. Teachers' unions need to expand their mission to serve the interests of students as well as members, and school district bureaucracies that stifle experimentation must be cut down. Charter schools, the reform catch-all of the moment, are not to be written off: Although some are the educational equivalent of ValuJet, crashing and burning at entrepreneurial speed, others—if governed by knowledgeable educators and subject to public review—have shown real promise. But while charters at their best are valuable laboratories, they are no substitute for sweeping reform of big school systems.

As Jonathan Schorr argues in these pages, liberals should not be defending school failure. There is a state of outrage among communities of color about the condition of schools and a crisis of confidence in education reform not limited to the parents of the poor. This special issue is designed to face that outrage and to engage the broad progressive community in an inclusive crusade for solutions.

COMMENT

China and Globalism

The politics of trade will always contrive to decide the most fateful questions in private while leaving public debate to chew over narrow, derivative issues. Thus, by design, the China debate was intended to frustrate popular critics and avoid the kind of full-throated, fundamental debate about globalization that's ripening here and around the world. Congress is not voting on admitting China to the World Trade Organization but only on repeal of the relatively impotent requirement of annual renewal of China's "normal" status as a trading partner. Under such shrunken circumstances, the smart money assumes the President will win

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COMMENT

this one, since the White House can always "buy" the last ten or fifteen votes by promising parochial favors to small-minded representatives indifferent to the international consequences.

Perhaps so, but—surprise—these are not normal times. Vigorous opposition mobilized by organized labor and many allies has already succeeded in transforming a remote diplomatic measure into a national test vote on the values of the global economic system. Details aside, the critics have framed a choice between dubious promises from crass commercial interests and the larger claims of longstanding American principles—a vote between money and values. Although portrayed by the big media as backward-looking provincials, the opponents have won the moral high ground—speaking for the future as progressive reformers, beckoning Americans to a more promising sense of what international relationships can be. Whatever the outcome, this roll call is not the climax of the China debate but its beginning. Indeed, it may become a threshold to the robust debate on globalization the establishment is so eager to avoid.

China is easily demonized, given its size and repressive politics, but it is also admirable for its energies and ambitions. Like other poor nations, China aspires to throw off centuries of stale history and become a modern, world-class industrial power. Like previous developing economies (including the nineteenth-century United States), China will play hardball in pursuit of this goal, courting foreign capital while trying to shield its infant industries from the import competition of more efficient overseas producers.

If China does gain full status in the WTO, we will doubtless witness a replay of what happened with Japan, Korea and other fast-growing nations—a long, bitter diplomatic struggle to make China live up to its promises and open its markets according to the rules. Decades of banging on Japan in this regard yielded very little, and we can expect China to be no less stubborn. Beijing is more candid about its intentions than Tokyo. In recent months Chinese officials have reassured domestic sectors—agriculture, insurance, telecommunications, among others—that its WTO market-opening agreements are "theoretical."

The point is this: China may indeed become the focus of a frustrated, embittering politics that describes it as the new "problem child," but China will only be the latest and largest expression of disorders embedded in the system itself. Rather than depict China as uniquely devious or evil, the hard questions ought to be directed at the design and operating principles of globalization. This malfunctioning system was not, after all, created by poor nations but designed in the citadels of advanced capitalism, especially Wall Street and Washington.

In fact, it would be impractical—and even unwise—for China to keep its word and comply with the WTO agreements. To open its financial system swiftly to foreign banks and investors would invite the same inward rush of manic capital that led to sudden breakdowns in other fast-growing Asian economies. To "rationalize" state-owned enterprises and domestic markets in the manner envisioned by the WTO would generate great inequities and social upheaval. The process of modernizing and privatizing has already created massive unemployment and simmering unrest across the nation—sporadic violent protests and mass strikes by displaced workers, often enraged by the official corruption of deal-making with Western capitalism. This is not an argument for maintaining China's status quo but a warning against the kind of "shock therapy" haste that the global system prescribed for Russia. The Chinese have so far been wise enough to avoid that brutal road to free-market capitalism; one would have thought that US leaders had also learned something from that failed experiment. However, if pressures from foreign capital do persuade China to change swiftly, the consequences may be harsh repression and unpredictable violence. If there's another tragedy like Tiananmen Square, US capital will be implicated in the bloodshed.

The globalist establishment assumes that bringing China into the WTO will throw a huge log in the path of reformers seeking labor rights, environmental protection and other social standards as new operating rules for globalization. But those smug leaders may have it backward. Certainly, China provides a new obstacle to reform, but its main impact may be to hasten the discrediting of the WTO and other international institutions. China's irregular presence may dramatically demonstrate the lawless contradictions tolerated within the system. The WTO regime cannot now enforce its commercial edicts in disputes among the most advanced economies. Imagine the WTO's impotence when it tries to impose its "free trade" ideology on developing China.

These and other contradictions lead to one stark proposition: The present system does not provide a sane path to prosperity or democracy, not for China and not for other nations or the system as a whole. What the new reformers are saying is that globalization cannot proceed further along this reckless road, not without violent breakdown or political rebellion. But there is a more plausible way for the world to continue to pursue economic and social integration among rich and poor nations. It would require a frank admission that self-regulating markets—without rules to govern the social and economic behavior of investors and multinational corporations—are bound to fail. The alternative will require vigorous politics to promote new rules and principles that reflect the values and aspirations of societies and, ultimately, new institutions that can be trusted to represent people as faithfully as capital.

No one should imagine, even in the best circumstances, that a country like China will be able to change quickly or that it

CALVIN TRILLIN

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

So Ford now says the SUV
Is very bad for you and me.
It slurps gas to a fare-thee-well,
And makes the earth as hot as hell.
Its weight means any car it hits
Is pulverized to tiny bits.
These facts don't mean that sales will slow.
Ford simply thought we'd like to know.

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COMMENT

must abandon its economic aspirations. Reforming the global system means accepting a more patient—more realistic—sense of history than the free-market zealots tolerate. But reform does also mean setting the standards that nations like China must begin to live up to or else lose their place in the globalizing process. China is the 800-pound gorilla that finally brings these points into focus for distressed citizens everywhere. WILLIAM GREIDER

William Greider is The Nation*'s national affairs correspondent.*

LA: Call the Feds

When Chief Bernard Parks of the Los Angeles Police Department heard the news in mid-May, he reportedly went into rigid shock. Seated across a table, the Justice Department's civil rights head, Bill Lann Lee, read to him and a handful of other officials a harshly worded communiqué. Lax management of the 10,000-member LAPD, said Lee, had permitted some officers to engage in a pattern of excessive force, false arrests and unreasonable searches. The federal ultimatum was unmistakable: Either Los Angeles agrees to a negotiated consent decree guaranteeing authentic police reform or Justice will sue to take over and manage the scandal-ridden LAPD.

Lee's bold intervention was greeted warmly by police reformers, who have seen their most strenuous efforts of the past decade thwarted by internal LAPD resistance and a feckless city administration. As the crisis deepened and calls for an external, independent investigation of the LAPD escalated, Mayor Richard Riordan, his handpicked Police Commission and Chief Parks bunkered together and essentially treated the scandal as a PR problem that would be resolved through internal channels. But Lee, a veteran of the Los Angeles NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, knew of the deep rot inside the LAPD from direct experience. Using a 1994 federal statute empowering Justice to take over out-of-control police departments and supported by four years of monitoring the LAPD, he moved to do what dawdling local officials wouldn't dare. "Bill Lee's message to the city was unmistakable," says local civil rights attorney Connie Rice. "Time to give it up. Time to finally get serious." Mayor Riordan is still dragging his feet, but the consensus among city leaders is to reach a settlement with the Feds and avoid an embarrassing civil rights lawsuit.

When City Council president John Ferraro named a four-member team to represent the city, he pointedly left Chief Parks off the list. Parks has earned a reputation as a fierce opponent of opening the department up to "outsiders," including local elected officials. "And that's the root of this problem—this huge, inert mass that is the sealed-off, resistant internal culture of the LAPD," says reform-minded retired LAPD Assistant Chief David Dotson. "Until that is broken down there will be little reform."

If a court-monitored consent decree is eventually clamped on the LAPD, it would be the most significant implementation yet of the 1994 federal law. And taking on one of the country's biggest and most notorious police departments would be strong evidence that the Feds are finally getting serious about the national plague of police brutality.

An LA–Justice Department settlement could help pry open the department to more scrutiny. But the wrongful prosecutions and convictions associated with the scandal suggest that the LAPD cancer has spread through the entire LA criminal justice system. It too should be subjected to independent review. MARC COOPER

Desperately Seeking Issues

How much do issues matter in this presidential contest, especially in a year hailed as a time of prosperity and peace? With the primary season long gone (Bob Jones who?), the presidential race has entered a heavy-slogging period, in which Al Gore and George W. Bush fence daily over policy initiatives. Billions for smaller classroom size, Gore exclaims—take that! Oh yeah? Bush replies. Tax credits for developers who build low-income housing—in your kisser! But while both political heirs pour out fact sheets on healthcare, the budget and foreign policy, only a tiny slice of the electorate notices. According to a poll conducted by the Joan Shorenstein Center at Harvard University, 12 percent claim they devote "a great deal of attention" or "quite a bit of attention" to the 2000 campaign. A quarter say "only a little," 51 percent say none. Eighty-two percent could not recall a particular news story on the campaign from the previous day. Which means most voters didn't absorb Bush's carefully crafted economic policy address or Gore's *mea culpa*–laden campaign finance reform proposal. But in the run-up to the summer conventions, both campaigns are screen-testing policy proposals, looking for issue traction that can be exploited once people *are* watching.

Each is taking the same approach: Throw all you can at the wall (and your opponent) and see what sticks. Gore has tried to make gun control and Bush's anti–gun control record an issue. Polls indicate that a majority of Americans favor stricter gun laws. But Bush rates higher than Gore when pollsters ask, Who would you rather have in charge of gun policy? Obviously, Gore has more work to do. Bush then made himself a tougher target by announcing that Texas would spend $1 million to provide free trigger locks—a move far short of mandatory locks but one that lets Bush act like he's no NRA-controlled extremist.

In a time of supposed budget surpluses, both candidates have proposed new spending. Gore champions a $115 billion education boost that would include money for teachers and school construction. Bush counters with a program one-ninth the size plus vouchers to parents of children in "failing" schools. Both are unrelenting in their education rhetoric, particularly in the use of the word "accountability." So neither seems likely to gain an edge in that face-off. But a draw doesn't hurt Bush, who has to demonstrate only that he's not a social-program-hating right-winger. His aim is to raise issues that make it harder for the Democrats to paint him as a meanspirited Gingrichian Republican. Gore proposes an extensive—but not comprehensive—expansion in medical coverage for uninsured children. Bush offers a modest half-step—a $7.4 billion program to help people afford long-term healthcare coverage. See, I'm really a compassionate conservative who gives a darn (and he mimics Clinton by pushing a program that doesn't match the lofty rhetoric accompanying it). Political

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COMMENT

handicappers praise Bush's strategy, since the polls show him faring well among women—especially the Clinton soccer moms Democrats need to counter their weak standing among men.

Each contender accuses the other of lacking a coherent foreign policy, without putting forth one himself. Bush slams Gore for being in an Administration that ad hocs its way through crises. Gore whacks Bush as a novice on national security. (Recently, when asked about the Taliban, Bush responded, "Oh, I thought you meant some band. The Taliban in Afghanistan! Absolutely. Repressive.") Beyond that, the early rumbles over foreign policy have been confusing. Bush criticizes Clinton/Gore for cozying up to Beijing; then his campaign slams Gore for not pushing Congress to pass the China trade measure. Gore accuses Bush of being an isolationist *and* a cold warrior. (Weren't cold warriors usually interventionists?) There is, though, no disagreement on one foreign policy question: globalization. Both favor corporate free trade.

Bush is the candidate who suggests far-reaching domestic policy changes. During the primaries, he called for a budget-busting, trillion-plus tax hike tilted toward the rich. Even Congressional Republicans refused to endorse it. Lately Bush has been chatting less about the tax cut and more about privatizing Social Security, which would cost about $850 billion—but without venturing details. Can he have a gigantic tax cut and a privatized Social Security—and the new social spending he's advocated? Gore immediately began shooting at another "risky" Bush scheme, as Democratic Senators Bob Kerrey, John Breaux and Pat Moynihan volunteered kind words for it. Gore and Bush also split on Medicare, with the Vice President supporting drug benefits and Bush promoting another privatization initiative. The most intriguing aspect of the 2000 contest is that each campaign thinks it can use Social Security to its advantage. Bush's Social Security stance is the policy matter most likely to become a decisive—and divisive—issue come fall.

Conventional wisdom holds that each party has a bedrock support of 30 to 35 percent, and the election is won by appealing to the remaining 30 percent. Consequently, much of the issue-jockeying focuses on the nonloyalists. But in a close contest, both campaigns need their bedrock voters to flock to the polls in large numbers. And these people care about issues. Gore pissed off many Democrats with his Elián shuffle. Will his support for the China trade bill turn off labor voters in, say, Michigan, an all-important state? Bush is thinking of selecting as his running-mate Tom Ridge, the pro-choice, Catholic Governor of Pennsylvania, another all-important state. This would make abortion rights—which Gore will, of course, pump up as an issue—a matter of contention *within* the GOP. Can Bush afford to alienate right-wing activists? Can Gore, whose positions on the environment are faint echoes of the forceful proposals of his book *Earth in the Balance*, get away with disappointing environmentalists? With Ralph Nader and Pat Buchanan in the race, Gore and Bush cannot be cavalier in asking that traditional question, Where else can they go?

In the issue-tussle to come, style will be as important—if not more so—than positions. Gore may score debate points with blasts at Bush's views and record on education, the environment, the economy, Social Security and Medicare. But Bush strategists are hoping his hack-and-slash manner will backfire. By talking ardently about education, healthcare for working families and other "family security" issues, and being repeatedly photographed with brown, black and yellow children, Bush is creating an image that could be difficult for the Democrats to destroy. His I-care photo ops and policy thrusts will likely not win over traditional Democratic voters, but they make him seem nonfrightening and reasonable to swing voters. The exchange between the campaigns may boil down to music (Bush) versus words (Gore).

With ratings lower than Bush, Gore needs an issue-dominated campaign. As CNN analyst Bill Schneider says, "Without an issue advantage, the election becomes purely personal. And then Gore's in trouble." There *are* policy differences. Perhaps Bush has helped Gore by sticking a Social Security bull's-eye on his own back. But not until fall, when voters are more engaged, will we know whether the issues are more important than the usual big issue of presidential elections—the candidates themselves. DAVID CORN

In Fact...

POPPY TELLS WHY CUBA'S NOT CHINA

When former President George Bush declared his support recently for the China trade bill, he said that Cuba does not warrant similar treatment. Why? Because China had come a long way in improving human rights, and Cuba, he asserted, is "way behind" China in that regard. Cuba is "still back in the era we walked into in China twenty-five years ago—you get followed on the [street] blocks, just restricting all kinds of individual liberties and rights." Cuba's human rights record is not laudable, but neither is it demonstrably worse than China's. Cuba harasses nonregistered religious groups; China detained 35,000 practitioners of the Falun Gong faith and sentenced some of them to up to three years in re-education labor camps. China engages in extrajudicial killings; Cuba reportedly does not. Cuba has 400 political prisoners, China about 230,000 in the re-education camps. China has intensified the suppression of organized dissent and locks up dissenters for years. The trend in Cuba is to detain dissidents for short spells and threaten them with imprisonment if they continue their activities. China hardly deserves better treatment than Cuba based on human rights criteria. Bush *père* should get out more.

NEWS OF THE WEAK IN REVIEW

The wedding of Callista Bisek (34) and Newt Gingrich (56) has been announced, and like all young couples starting a new home (number 3 for the groom), they've registered with various stores. As a service to our readers we checked their list at Williams-Sonoma, the kitchen goods chain, and found plenty of gift-giving opportunities. There are seventy-four different items listed, starting with six cookbooks (well, that's a good start) and on through just about everything one could possibly need (except the kitchen sink)—from a three-quart casserole and a lasagna baking dish to a digital thermometer and a citrus zester. Those of you looking for a gift commensurate with the esteem in which you hold the groom might check out the French cook's spoons at $2.50 each. If that's too steep, form a co-op of ten—only 25 cents per person. But send Callista and Newt your best!

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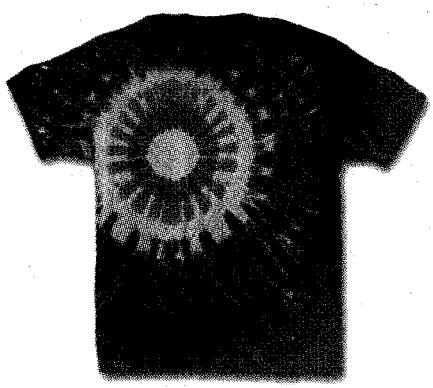

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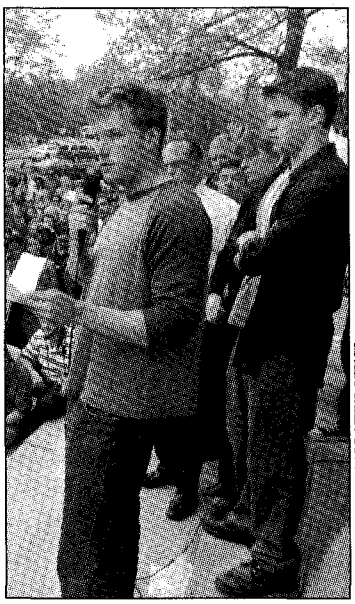
THE BEAT BY JOHN NICHOLS



MARC HALEVI, HARVARD NEWS OFFICE

UNFAIR HARVARD When Harvard employees rallied for a $10.25-an-hour minimum wage in early May, backers packed the Yard. Credit the **Progressive Student Labor Movement**'s **Living Wage Campaign** with a fine job of publicizing the rally. But there's no denying that the appearance of actors **Ben Affleck** and **Matt Damon** helped draw a crowd. These were not your usual celebrities flying in to lend their star power to the cause, however. Affleck's father was a janitor, and his stepmother was a cleaning woman, at Harvard, so he had some personal authority when he called for making "this school a place where you don't have to avert your eyes in shame when you encounter a janitor in the hallway." Damon, who played the genius janitor (at MIT) in *Good Will Hunting*, spoke as a former Harvard student: "This is the richest university in the world, and the fact that the people who keep the machine running—who feed the students, look out for their safety and clean their bathrooms and hallways—are not given a living wage is demeaning to us all." City Councilwoman **Marjorie Decker**, who played on the same Cambridge Little League team as Affleck and went to high school with Damon, asked the actors to join the rally. "It wasn't a hard sell," Decker says. "They know Cambridge, and they know there's something wrong when, in a boom economy, Harvard won't pay employees enough to live above poverty level." Historian **Howard Zinn**, who worked with Damon and Affleck on an ill-fated Fox TV drama [see David Corn, "Fox Nixes Zinn Flick, May 22], also spoke, calling on the university to "teach compassion and caring" by example. Among dozens of Harvard profs endorsing the cause are **Henry Louis Gates Jr.**, **Juliet Schor** and **Cornel West**.

PRAIRIE POPULISM State Attorney General **Heidi Heitkamp** may be a native of one of the smallest towns in America—Mantador, North Dakota, population 77. And her roots—she's the daughter of a construction worker and a school cook—are surely humbler than those of her foe in the North Dakota governor's race, a Republican banking heir. But she won three statewide races before turning 40 and is now in a position to be the state's first woman governor. True to the progressive populist principles of her political forebears—she's the nominee of a unique, progressive hybrid of the old radical farmers' **Non-Partisan League** and the Democrats—Heitkamp backs a statewide living-wage law, condemns federal farm policies that favor agribusiness over family farmers and joins US Senators **Byron Dorgan** and **Kent Conrad** in criticizing trade deals that put the interests of corporations ahead of workers and farmers.... The state Democratic ticket includes three women and a Native American, causing the *Fargo Forum* to complain about "gender police" and a "politically correct slate." Democratic-NPL State Representative **Merle Boucher**, referring to the GOP nominees for governor and lieutenant governor, retorted that the GOP's only bow to diversity was to nominate "a millionaire from Fargo and a millionaire from Minot."

VOX TURNS UP THE VOLUME Raw, raucous and radical, the Pacific Northwest's **Sleater-Kinney** band makes music that rips sexism, misogyny and the war on abortion rights. "The number-one must-have is that we are safe," sang the trio's **Corin Tucker** at a Seattle club where the group debuted songs from its new CD, *All Hands on the Bad One*. Last summer Sleater-Kinney headlined a Seattle benefit that raised $5,000 for **Planned Parenthood**; at the band's May show, activists from **VOX**, Planned Parenthood's youth-mobilization arm, passed out condoms and signed up dozens of recruits. "We asked if we could have a table at the Seattle show," said **Tracey Denlinger**, a Seattle VOX organizer. "They said they wanted us on their whole tour." Explained VOX's **Heidi Melz**, "The 18–30 generation we're working with is the post-*Roe* generation. They use Planned Parenthood clinics; they love Planned Parenthood. But they aren't necessarily aware that the services they rely on are under constant threat. We tell them they can't take these rights for granted, and we teach them how to be political advocates." VOX helped Planned Parenthood affiliates hire campus organizers in Wisconsin and Washington, where the group is also recruiting young professionals. This summer VOX will register voters at concerts featuring rockers, rappers and others on the Vans Warped Tour.

ADDING IT UP IN AMARILLO **Lani Guinier** and others have long argued that one of the best ways to increase minority representation is with cumulative voting. For her views Guinier was labeled "quota queen" by the *Wall Street Journal* and persona non grata by Clinton. But the voting alternative is working in Amarillo, Texas. After two decades in which minority candidates in Amarillo—where blacks and Hispanics are roughly 30 percent of the population—lost every race they ran in for the local school board, the **League of United Latin American Citizens** sued, with support from the local **NAACP**. The settlement created a cumulative voting system that allotted each voter four votes, which could be given to one candidate or spread among several. Amarillo voters made history May 6, electing **James Allen**, an African-American, and **Rita Sandoval**, a Latina. "It's clear that the cumulative voting system works," says LULAC's **Nancy Bosquez**.

John Nichols's e-mail address is jnichols@thenation.com.

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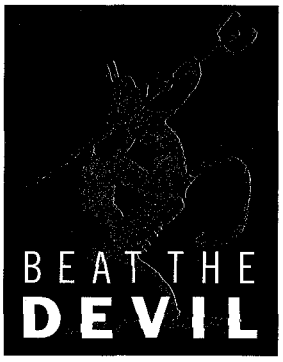
ALEXANDER COCKBURN

Even Worse Than Orwell



Add now to our "God that failed" dishonor roll the famous Italian name of Ignazio Silone, who turns out to have been an informer at a considerably greater level of infamy than that of George Orwell, who passed along to the British secret police the names of people he suspected of being Communists or fellow travelers.

Like Orwell, Silone has been hailed down the years as a moral saint, a man who fought Fascism first as a Communist organizer, then as someone who quit the Communist movement long before the great purges of the late thirties, writing the enormously influential anti-Fascist novels *Fontamara* and *Bread and Wine*.

In the cold war years Silone was a major star in the anti-Communist firmament. Along with Arthur Koestler, André Gide and Richard Wright, he contributed to the 1950 collection *The God That Failed* and directed the Italian section of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, with his journal *Tempo Presente* receiving—just like its British equivalent, *Encounter*—a covert subsidy from the CIA.

A decade after his death in 1978, Silone's hometown was mounting an exhibition of documents about his life, and the organizers wrote to the national archive in search of materials. One of the archive's superintendents was going through a file on Silone put together by OVRA—the Fascist political police—and came across two letters from 1929 and 1930 of a nature so sensational that he promptly hid them elsewhere in the archive.

The truly repugnant details of Silone's years as an informer for Mussolini's secret police began to surface in 1996, when a young historian and biographer of Silone, Dario Biocca, aired documents he'd discovered separately. They pointed to Silone's role as an informer in 1928 and 1930. Amid the uproar that ensued, someone at the archive leaked the 1930 letter to *La Repubblica*. The letter, in Silone's hand, was signed by his code name, "Silvestri," and was addressed to Emilia Bellone, sister of Guido Bellone, a particularly sinister figure in the highest ranks of the Fascist political police. Replete with self-serving proclamations of the writer's moral character, the letter informed Bellone that "Silvestri" wanted to start a new life and thus terminate the "long, trusting relationship" with Bellone.

Silone's real name was Secondino Tranquilli, born in 1900, son of a small landowner in the Abruzzi. Orphaned at 11 when an earthquake wiped out his village, he became a young Socialist militant and then, in 1921, a founding member of the Italian Communist Party. Across the next nine years he was constantly on the move across Europe as a clandestine and increasingly senior Communist organizer. By 1927, as the Fascists were tightening their grip, Tranquilli/Silone was one of the top eight leaders of the PCI in exile, returning to Italy in that year as head of the party's underground network. Amid the internal upheavals over the Comintern's "Third Period" instructions to wage war on the non-Communist left, Tranquilli/Silone was expelled from the PCI in 1931.

For his entire career as a Communist organizer, and even before the PCI was founded, "Silvestri" was informing to the secret police. Biocca and another historian, Mauro Canali, have assembled archival documents in a collection, *L'Informatore*, that shows beyond a doubt that Silone embarked on his treachery in 1919. The man who preened to Bellone in 1930 of the "sense of morality, which has always been strong in me," while mumbling defensively that he was "conscious of not having greatly harmed either my friends or my country," sent many of his comrades to rot in Mussolini's prisons where conditions—he knew it well—were lethal.

Tranquilli/Silone's detailed reports to the secret police were fearfully effective. In a very useful outline of the affair appearing in the May/June *New Left Review*, John Foot writes that "Silone was almost certainly invaluable in the detection and depletion of the Communist and anti-Fascist networks built up across Europe in the twenties." The word "almost" is unnecessary, and the title "The Spy Who Failed," atop an account by Alexander Stille in *The New Yorker* for May 15, is wrong. As a police spy Silone was horribly successful. Time after time he betrayed underground cells of courageous Italians trying to fight back against Mussolini and was well aware of his worth to the Fascists. A 1924 letter to his police contact shows Silone exulting at his promotion in the PCI and immediately putting out his hand for more money. This letter, along with all other crucial documents, can be read in English in Canali's invaluable piece in the May *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*.

Just how deep was the moral abyss into which Silone slid in 1919? Until the archival documents overwhelmed them, his supporters had tried to argue that he'd briefly collaborated with the Fascist police in 1928 to try to mitigate punishment for his brother Romolo, arrested and then imprisoned as a suspect in a Milan bombing. But by that time "Silvestri" had been selling information to the police for nine years; besides, how does one explain a chilling phrase in a 1928 letter from "Silvestri" to the police suggesting an action that "could also dampen down the current press campaign abroad in support of him," i.e., brother Romolo? A sentence later Tranquilli/Silone is advising the police on how to protect other informers known to him in the PCI underground.

This leads us to an important question. After his brother's death in prison and the dexterously managed evolution that led him to Carl Jung's couch and a new career as an anti-Fascist novelist, why didn't the Fascists nullify his effectiveness by leaking the truth about his career as an informer? Silone had a formidable weapon of his own. He surely could have made the following bargain with Bellone when the latter came to Switzerland in a final effort to retain the services of his invaluable spy. Silone could have said, Expose me and I will expose your other informers.

Why did Silone become an informer? Did he tell Jung? Who knows? Anyway, we're talking here about acts and consequences. As an informer Silone did just fine. He ended his days with his habitual high respect for his own moral fiber, twenty years after his police supervisor, Bellone, died in a lunatic asylum. ■

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PATRICIA J. WILLIAMS

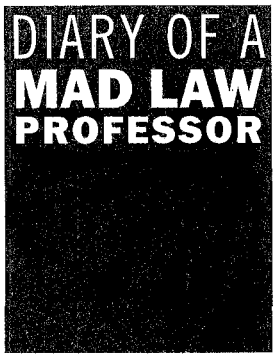
Beauty and the Beast

And the other thing, because no one has the guts to say it, if we could make better human beings by knowing how to add genes, why shouldn't we do it? What's wrong with it? —James Watson, Founder, Human Genome Project

Many people love their [golden] retrievers.... Could people be chosen in the same way? Would it be so terrible to allow parents to at least aim for a certain type, in the same way that great breeders...try to match a breed of dog to the needs of a family?
—Gregory Pence, University of Alabama

Suppose parents could add 30 points to their children's IQs. Wouldn't you want to do it? And if you don't, your neighbors will, and your child will be the stupidest in the neighborhood.
—Lester Thurow, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

[Eventually] the GenRich class and the Natural class will become...entirely separate species with no ability to cross-breed, and with as much romantic interest in each other as a current human would have for a chimpanzee. —Lee Silver, Princeton University



Once upon a time, in a magical kingdom not so far away, there lived a king and a queen who ruled over a gentle, ambitious and profit-seeking populace with an almost invisible hand. The king was wealthy and the queen was beautiful, but to their great sorrow, they were unable t conceive the child of their dreams. Time and again, they had tried but produced only average products, never more than three-fifths of their dream; time and again they were obliged to discard these defective components and renew the selection process for a perfect heir.

One day, a confident young man clad in the resplendent raiment of a gentleman and a scholar entered the realm. "I am a dream factor," said the self-assured young dandy. "If I may have patent and royalty rights, I will grant your true heart's desire."

Nine months later, a princess was born, to the great joy of all. She was named Beauty. At her christening, the confident young dandy unrolled a scroll and proclaimed her blessed with nine great (patented) gifts. The first gift was the gene for superb testing skills. The second was a gene protecting against the five most deadly forms of cancer, the third the gene for low cholesterol, the fourth for height, the fifth for physical grace and cotillion skills, the sixth for resistance to obesity, the seventh for anti-wrinkling emollients, the eighth for long, blond tresses with no split ends, the ninth for perpetual mood enhancement.

Life hummed along. By the time Beauty reached adolescence, she was the envy of every girl in the court. She was willowy, graceful and the kingdom's undisputed champion at the game of bobolink. She was a flawless musician, had translated all known volumes of Etruscan poetry into Middle French and Old Croatian, had devised a spell for desalinizing sea water cheaply and, of course, her test scores were off the charts.

One day when Beauty was 15, she was sitting at her loom, embroidering her signature quadratic equations into the silken woof. Suddenly she pricked her finger on a needle fashioned from the thorn of a bramble bush patented to kill pesky insects and corn blight alike. Unfortunately, since Beauty's gossamer good looks were cloned from a bio-enhanced brew that included butterfly wings, the prick of the insecticidal thorn was nothing short of poisonous to her cancer-resistant but otherwise quite delicate constitution. Beauty fell instantly into a deep, unshakable slumber.

A shadow fell across the land, and the people began to weep. The king and queen offered a chest of gold to anyone who could awaken Beauty, but to no avail, despite the efforts of wizards who had gone to the very best schools. A fog blew in, and a long season of drizzle began.

It was still drizzling a year later when a handsome prince with rippling muscles, a natural immunity to the tragic affliction of erectile dysfunction and a cleft in his chin happened to pass through the realm. He had been riding for many miles and was tired and thirsty. He presented himself at the castle, where the king and queen laid out a sumptuous repast with fine wines, strolling musicians and a silver-tongued public intellectual seated upon every guest's right.

Late that evening, as the prince was guided to his elegantly appointed sleeping quarters, a door mysteriously blew open just as he passed before it. It was the door to the room where Beauty, a little waxen perhaps but still stunning, lay reclining on a tastefully backlit golden bier. The prince was instantly smitten. Beauty awoke from her trance and locked eyes with the prince; there was a beautiful wedding, and the whole kingdom dined on candied hummingbirds' wings and danced for days.

If they had just left well enough alone, Beauty and the prince probably would have lived happily ever after. As it was, however, the prince fancied himself a scientist and engaged the services of a knowledgeable astrologer and a rather grand alchemist, just to make sure they and their children lived in eternal rapture.

One day the alchemist mixed up a conception-inducing potion of mercury, wolfsbane and tree sap; and the astrologer determined that Beauty must imbibe it beneath a full moon with Venus in perigee. And so Beauty grew great with child, perfection guaranteed. There was rejoicing throughout the realm. Nine months later the princess gave birth to a bright-eyed, healthy little werewolf.

"Oops," said the alchemist. But such large acts of enchantment, once done, can rarely be undone, and the astrologer and the alchemist went into early retirement, never to dabble in the magical arts again. The new princeling's plushly dark physique was widely understood to be an omen of misfortune. The little werewolf was banished to the forest, where some very kind chimpanzees took him in. Beauty and the prince remained childless and fretful for the rest of their days. Some years later, when the barbarian horde swept down from the east, the populace surrendered quietly. ■

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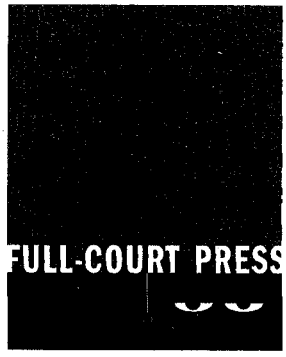
ERIC ALTERMAN

Disinterestedness Dies



When, in 1980, George Will was discovered to be coaching Ronald Reagan on debating tactics one minute and pronouncing him a "thoroughbred performer" the next, journalists professed to be shocked and angered by Will's ethical transgression. But when *Crossfire* host Mary Matalin is reported to be a regular, albeit unpaid, adviser to the Bush campaign, we hear not a peep from the guardians of journalism's professional ethics. What's the difference?

Recall the Will flap: Will insisted that all he had done was ask Reagan "a recondite question bristling with references to Resolution 242 and 'the green line,'" regarding the Arab-Israeli peace process. With his answer, Will felt compelled to add, the soon-to-be President "did not distinguish himself." Dumped by the New York *Daily News* and widely attacked elsewhere, Will responded that as a "columnist" rather than a "journalist" he had done nothing that Walter Lippmann, Joseph Alsop and others would not have done. Ben Bradlee, *Washington Post* executive editor at the time, later told me that if it had been up to him, "I would have canned him on the spot," but his colleague on the editorial page, Meg Greenfield, did not agree. The flap quickly died down, and the *Daily News* quietly reinstated him. Will emerged an even bigger bigfoot than before.

Will's legacy appears to be that pundits are so inured to conflicts of interest that even working as an unpaid operative for a candidate does not disqualify you from hosting a pundit chat show. When the *Washington Post* revealed that the *Crossfire* host had been working with the Bush campaign "for months," the story appeared to cause little outrage anywhere. This surprised *Post* media reporter Howard Kurtz, one of the authors of the article and the host of CNN's media-watch program, *Reliable Sources*. Kurtz says Matalin's role "creates a real problem for *Crossfire* that at the very least should require Mary to disclose her role whenever she discusses the Bush campaign." CNN president Richard Kaplan responded that Matalin will do this whenever appropriate but does not agree that it's a "problem." "Nobody hired Mary to be impartial," Kaplan told me when I cornered him at a media event. Still, he says, he would not use Matalin to comment after a debate the way ABC used Will. "She is the host of *Crossfire*, period, and she will reveal her role whenever appropriate."

Alas, Matalin was hosting *Crossfire* and working for Bush "for months" before anybody revealed anything. Kaplan recuses himself on this point; he says he did not hire Matalin and was not aware of the situation when she was hired. He directed me to Gail Evans, a CNN executive vice president who oversees all talk shows. But Evans ignored my call, as did Matalin herself.

So what have we learned here? Pundits are not journalists when it comes to standards of impartiality, and no nonmonetary conflict of interest is so great that it disqualifies you from hosting a pundit chat show. These are valuable lessons. And if Matalin had taken the personal disclosure issue a bit more seriously, we would actually have reached a situation that is a bit more honest and open than the charade under which so many pundits now operate. Does Paul Begala of MSNBC's *Equal Time* know a few secrets about the Gore campaign he's not revealing? Did Sidney Blumenthal tell us every last unflattering truth about the Clinton Administration when he worked at *The New Yorker*? And what of all the free and secret advice offered on the side? Most of these guys are more politicians than journalists, but they retain the convenient fiction because it pays better. Wouldn't it be nice if they admitted these connections without the *Washington Post* having to report them first?

Gramsci Lives

For all the egocentricity and navel-gazing among journalists, it is odd how shy they are about revealing the decision-making process that goes into, as Herbert Gans phrased it, "deciding what's news." Well, thanks to the Pew Research Center, we can no longer avoid a key ingredient: corporate-inspired self-censorship. According to the Pew study of nearly 300 journalists and news executives commissioned by the *Columbia Journalism Review*, nearly 25 percent "of the local and national journalists say they have purposely avoided newsworthy stories, while nearly as many acknowledge they have softened the tone of stories to benefit the interests of their news organizations." Forty-one percent "admit they have engaged in *either* or *both* of these practices." [Emphasis in original.] A key category of the unreported included "stories that could damage the news organization's parent company, advertisers or friends." Just as the Soviet Union could repress free speech without resorting to purges and mass murder after a while as citizens began to internalize the system, corporations can educate their journalistic properties to kill stories before they ever reach the level of corporate censorship. As more and more journalistic institutions fall under multiple corporate owners… Well, do the math.

Liberal Media Hides

National Journal recently published what, at first glance, looks to be somewhat scientific evidence for liberal bias among journalists. Through the miracle of Lexis/Nexis, the author, Eron Shosteck, notes that the phrases "extreme right" and "far right" appear more often in the news than "extreme left" or "far left." Sounds convincing until you remember that there's a political reality out there being described, and its names are Tom DeLay, Bill Archer, Steve Forbes, Ralph Reed, Bob Barr, Rush Limbaugh, Pat Robertson and Jesse Helms. Last I looked, Noam Chomsky was not exactly chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. But what can we expect from a magazine edited by well-known extreme-rightist Michael Kelly? ■

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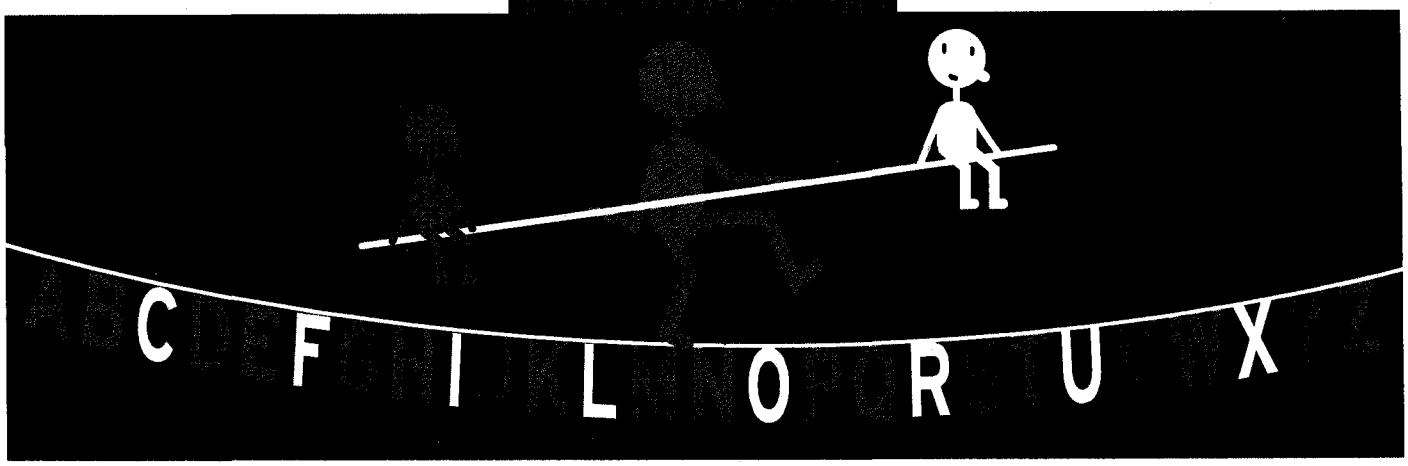

FORUM

SCHOOL COLORS: The Racial Politics of Public Education

For this special issue, The Nation *asked a range of experts and activists to answer a series of questions on race, politics and educational inequities. The interviews, excerpts of which follow, were conducted by longtime progressive educator Herbert Kohl, director of the Center for Teaching Excellence and Social Justice at the University of San Francisco and author of numerous books—including* 36 Children, *his 1967 account of teaching a Harlem classroom, and 1998's* Discipline of Hope. *—The Editors*

How can we respond most effectively to right-wing assaults on the premises of public education?

Amy Wilkins: The way that you deal with the right is by fixing the schools. The first thing we have to do is admit the truth, that the schools are underserving important populations of kids, primarily kids of color and low-income kids. Too much of the left's rhetoric around public education has been: Everything is fine. Everything is getting better. SAT scores are going up. More people are going to college. We haven't talked about the serious problems—the problem, for example, of the wide and growing achievement gap that separates low-income students and students of color from others. And it's an utter disconnect. Parents hear our voices and then they see what's going on in their schools, and they say, These guys are on Mars. What schools are they talking about? That's not what's happening in my schools.

You see things like 94 percent of the African-American parents in LA Unified [School District] rate their schools as fair to poor. And we keep saying, No, everything's fine. So the left has to re-establish credibility with folks by saying that we recognize these schools aren't doing what they should be doing. And we should also admit that more money won't answer all the problems. That there are structural changes that have to be made.

Luis Garden Acosta: As people who care about democracy, we ought to be careful about how we look at those who seem to oppose what we stand for. My own life in the Catholic Church and growing up in Brooklyn relating to different cultures and ethnicities and classes has taught me that there is no monolithic conservative movement. Often when I sit down with parents who sound like they are are right-wing, I begin to realize that what they are really saying is, "I'm afraid for my child and I don't have respect for the system. I can't believe in it anymore because it hasn't protected my neighbor's child and maybe my child will be next." And we find that we have common ground, we share a commitment to the development of our children and to principles of democracy.

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It's just that the discussion is so politicized and so polarized by opportunists, political leaders who really don't want to do much about anything besides talk about it. Of course, there are some who really believe that there ought not to be a public school system, who really believe that public money should be used for the expression of religious tenets and on and on, and we would have real difficulty creating any kind of united front with them. But I do believe that we have suffered, our movement has suffered, from not trying to reach out more effectively.

The voucher movement, in particular, has attracted support in communities of color. How do you respond to that?

Amy Wilkins: I would argue that the problem with vouchers is, first, that they rely on market forces to operate. We've never seen market forces really work well when it comes to people of color and low-income people. If market forces worked well for low-income people, they wouldn't be poor. If market forces worked, rotten milk wouldn't cost twice as much in a bodega in East Harlem as fresh milk does downtown. People could get home mortgages. People wouldn't pay $1 million for car insurance. The market fails these people again and again. So why do we think the market is going to work in educating their kids?

The second piece of it is that institutions receiving public money to educate kids need to be held accountable to the public. And private schools are not accountable to the public. And so one ought not to send funds to institutions that the community cannot hold accountable.

Luis Garden Acosta: Some people in our communities are feeling that the prevailing system has not supported them and that the teaching profession and the educational system as a whole don't really care about their children—that teachers would not be caught dead having their own children in the very schools that they teach in, and that administrators would prefer not to send their children to public schools.

So we are looking for change, for real change that would create some equity in how we raise our children in this country. Some people say that the only way that you are going to find equity is by creating your own private institutions or sending your children to private institutions. That is very appealing to parents who feel that their children won't be safe from violence and won't grow up to be productive and resourceful in public schools. So they think, Well, vouchers might be a good idea. Except when they look at it further, they begin to see that the people who are offering the voucher concept as a way out do not have their best interests at heart. They're only offering a voucher of $2,000 or $3,000 for the kind of education that clearly costs $10,000 a year or more. In fact, what they want to do is to do away with the kind of resources that are put into the public system. They want to eliminate it and give us an apartheid-like, segregated private experience that is even worse than what we have now. I think our people are beginning to realize that the voucher movement is a major fraud and deception that cruelly rips at their right to a public education.

What about charters and school choice—do you see these issues differently from vouchers?

Deborah Wei: In places like Philadelphia, where the school system is very entrenched, charter schools have particular appeal to communities that want to control their schools. I look at some of the charter schools that the Latino community has put together here, and I think, it's not systemic change; it's only going to reach however many hundred Latino kids who can get access to an education that's meaningful with people who care about them. But that's three or four hundred more kids than before. So in that sense, I'm leaning toward support of charter schools.

Luis Garden Acosta: It's important that people understand that charter schools are public schools. Not all charter laws speak to our vision of a charter, but the kind of charter that we are envisioning for El Puente is the kind that really grounds the school in the community. Charter schools are in fact what we asked for in 1969, when we [in Ocean Hill-Brownsville] demanded community control of our schools from the school board. We want full and total control and responsibility and accountability for the education of our children. We want to be able to do this in a way that really focuses on the school, and we want to be accountable but to call the shots and not be dangling like puppets while some central administration office pulls the strings.

Lisa Delpit: I wouldn't support vouchers but I do support school choice, and the only way that school choice seems to be able to happen right now, particularly in Atlanta, is through charter schools. I believe charter schools need to have an oversight committee that reflects in part the population of the children, but also that involves maybe university people and others who can bring resources and feedback, who will come in and say what isn't working. The charters often negotiate out of doing any kind of testing, and then there is no incentive for the school to change. And no incentive for the teachers not to say: The reason this isn't working is that these weren't the children we expected.

Adam Urbanski: I would prefer that charter schools within the public sector have unions rather than prohibit unions, but I think it would be wrong not to permit teachers and other workers in

Participants in the Forum

Luis Garden Acosta is founder, president and CEO of El Puente, a community organization that helped found the El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice in Brooklyn, New York.

Lisa Delpit is the director of the Center for Urban Educational Excellence and the Benjamin E. Mays Professor of Urban Educational Leadership at Georgia State University in Atlanta. Her most recent book is *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom* (New Press).

Harold Levy is Chancellor of the New York City Board of Education.

Adam Urbanski is president of the Rochester Teachers Association, vice president of the American Federation of Teachers and director of the Teacher Union Reform Network in Rochester, New York.

Deborah Wei, a curriculum specialist and longtime teacher, is a founding member of Asian Americans United, which organizes low-income and working Asians in Philadelphia.

Amy Wilkins is principal partner at the Washington, DC–based Education Trust, which works to close the achievement gap that separates low-income and minority students from more affluent and white students while also raising achievement for all.

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charter schools to choose whether or not to form a union. I also think charters ought to be prohibited from selecting students and barring other students, such as those with learning difficulties, or from low-income or minority backgrounds. There ought to be a level playing field so that they compete under circumstances that are similar to those that exist for other public schools.

Amy Wilkins: Charters are just schools. There are bad charters and there are good charters. Three things make for a good school: good teachers, rigorous curriculum and high standards. A charter may or may not have those things. But both charters and vouchers are very incomplete solutions to what ails the public schools. Even the biggest charter-voucher fans will admit that they'll only take care of a very small percentage of kids. You've still got kids left in the same boat as they were before. So they're sideshows. And they're sideshows that suck up all the oxygen in the discussion about what needs to be done to improve education for low-income and minority kids.

What are some of the major problems in urban schools and what can be done about them?

Harold Levy: So much of the difficulties that urban kids, particularly minority urban kids, face in education is a function of lowered expectations. Because there's this implied proposition that "those children" can't do it. Whereas the reality is, there are countless examples of schools that are effective on a very high level in neighborhoods where, simply looking at the demographics, there should be no such expectation.

Amy Wilkins: The most important thing we can do to make the schools better is to insure that low-income kids and kids of color have teachers of the same caliber as more affluent kids and white kids. If I could pick one thing, one lever to pull that would begin turning around the schools and win back the confidence of low-income parents, minority parents, in public education, it would be big, big attention to teacher quality in our schools.

What are the steps that the states can take? They can eliminate pay differentials between high- and low-poverty schools. They can forgive state student loans for well-qualified people who teach in high-minority or high-poverty schools, to make those schools more attractive to people. They can give signing bonuses to well-qualified people who agree to teach in hard-to-staff schools. And they can give staying bonuses to effective teachers who are already in the schools.

Then, at the district level, we have to sit down with the teachers' unions and talk about how the contracts—and sometimes the seniority provisions in those contracts—put the very newest teachers in high-poverty and high-minority schools and allow the experienced teachers to transfer themselves out of those schools and into the "more desirable" schools. What can we do with union contracts to help insure that all kids have access to fully qualified and experienced teachers?

At the school level, teachers have to stop fighting among themselves about who gets to teach which kids. That's one of the things we see all the time—teachers tie their own prestige, their imagined prestige, to the kids they're teaching. And it's the youngest, most inexperienced teachers who get to teach the difficult, low-track kids. Because tracking segregates kids, the low tracks are very black, brown and poor, and the high tracks are very white and affluent. So you have the least qualified teachers

A Grade for Racial Justice

It's not often that a school gets a grade, let alone one on behalf of its students of color. But thanks to the Racial Justice Report Card, a CD-ROM tool created by the Oakland-based Applied Research Center (ARC), many administrators are feeling the sweaty palms of accountability alongside their students. Last year parents and students in community organizations across the country used the CD-ROM to press their schools for data on expulsion rates, advanced-track enrollment, graduation rates and equality of learning resources in order to calculate a "grade in racial justice." The results confirmed what many students of color already knew—racial discrimination pervades education. Of the twelve districts tested, only one received a passing grade.

"There's no one picture of what is happening in our schools," says Libero Della Piana, co-author of ARC's report based on the data collected. "You have to look local." Zero-tolerance disciplinary policies, for instance, initiated by the federal Gun Free Schools Act of 1994, are enforced more harshly and unfairly in some areas than others. The law created a mandatory one-year expulsion policy for any student caught with a firearm at school, while leaving room for school officials to adjust sanctions on a case-by-case basis. But local policies now mete out similar punishments for a wide variety of offenses. This was the case in Decatur, Illinois, last fall when Jesse Jackson assailed the local school board's "zero tolerance for violence" policy after seven African-American students were expelled for two years following a fight that involved no weapons and caused no injuries. Zero-tolerance policies exacerbate existing inequalities, ARC's study suggests, since minority students were, in each district tested, already far more likely to be disciplined than whites. In Chicago, for example, where African-American students are 53 percent of the school population but 63 percent of those suspended or expelled, the district itself predicted that the number of expulsions would increase more than twelvefold in three years after zero-tolerance policies went into effect.

Schools got similarly low marks on other indicators of racial equity. Of all twelve cities, only in Los Angeles was the number of African-American teachers proportionate to African-American students. In Providence, Rhode Island, Latinos constituted almost half the student body, but only 5 percent of the teachers. In every district, either African-Americans, Latinos or both were underrepresented in advanced-track classes. Only San Francisco received a "pass" for an equal proportion of students of color going on to college.

ARC recommends a variety of reforms, from lowering the financial barriers that keep teaching corps white to setting goals for eliminating racial disparities in suspension and expulsion rates. In an era when even collecting and publishing data on race is a political act, it concludes that schools must be required to do so, and to address the inequities they find with concrete solutions.

ALISON MANN

Alison Mann is a New York–based writer and researcher.

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teaching the kids who need the very best teachers. And the kids who need the least, frankly, are getting the cream of the crop.

Who should be held accountable for the failure of schools?

Amy Wilkins: The adults who run them. Even those of us who call ourselves progressives and liberals and left have bought the argument that, because of poverty and racism, you can't expect these kids to succeed. Now people never say that out loud. But the way you hear it is in the shock, amazement, awe when people hear stories about black kids achieving at high levels. They go, Oh, my God, that's so amazing. Well, you know, it wouldn't be so amazing if a white kid did it.

What we've done by buying that argument is let the adults who run these schools off the hook. We've let the teachers off the hook. We've let the principals and the school boards and the superintendents off the hook. Poverty and racism present real challenges. But every day in every part of this country, there are people who prove that those challenges can be overcome. The Texas system, for example, holds schools accountable for improving the performance of all kids, broken down by race and income, in a more serious way than other states. In California, where the demography is fairly similar, you talk to teachers and you hear these horrible things—they really do believe demography is destiny and that you can't teach these children. In Texas the teachers don't believe that anymore because they know they have to teach these kids, their jobs are tied to it. Because it's a requirement, they've come to accept that it's possible.

What is the role of teachers' unions in the transformation of the schools?

Luis Garden Acosta: Working with the UFT [United Federation of Teachers] leadership here in New York City, I saw how effective they were in supporting the New Visions Initiative [an effort to engage communities in creating new, small schools beginning in the early nineties]. They were right there. They pushed. They supported development of small schools, almost charterlike schools, and whenever there were roadblocks in regard to the contract or in other kinds of regulations, they would step in and try to work it out. So clearly, I thought, they could be effective in leading—along with parents and young people themselves and leaders of the community—the transformation of our schools.

But I don't believe the transformation of the schools in the past was at the top of the union agenda. Too often the union has been mired in the day-to-day issues of security, benefits and salaries. Not that they shouldn't have the best salaries possible. I believe that they are underpaid. But it's been too much about that, at least as the public has perceived it, and not enough about the transformation, expertise and sacredness of their profession.

I would like to see the union call for a strike until all classrooms have a ratio of at least one adult teacher to twenty students. It's like you would want doctors to say, We refuse to work in a hospital where we know 90 percent of the patients will die because the equipment is bad and we don't have the kind of space and working conditions that will allow us to save patients. You'd want to believe that healers would strike—would use their powerful organization, the AMA, to make sure that they have a fighting chance to use their expertise and practice their profession. I would like to think that teachers would do no less. What can be more sacred than the development of an individual? Yet we haven't seen that kind of a strike. That's what is missing from the teachers' unions.

Adam Urbanski: From the beginning, we in teachers' unions ought to have defined our mission and our enlightened self-interest differently. We inherited a tradition that essentially said that the primary function of the union is to serve its members and to promote their economic and professional interests. A deeper, more sophisticated and ultimately more moral and pragmatic way to think about it—which would double, even triple the effectiveness of the union—would be to say that teachers' unions ought to serve not only the members but also their clients, on the assumption that if students do well then their teachers will do well. No community will long tolerate teachers doing well while their students are not.

What is the value of a curriculum sensitive to race and culture—for example, an Afrocentric curriculum—in teaching children of color?

Lisa Delpit: I sat down recently and talked with a group of boys at an all-boys middle school program. I asked them what made their school different, and they said, Well, this school is Afrocentric. I said, What does that mean? And one of the boys said, What it means is, you're taught to think for yourself. In the regular public schools, he said, you have to sit there and learn what the teacher is saying and memorize it. But here, if you disagree with what the teacher is saying or with what a book says, as long as you have evidence you can question it. And that is what, in a sense, Afrocentrism can be: where kids are taught that they have to use critical thinking in order to interpret the society in which they live and the media and the books and everything else. They can't develop critical thinking if you're asking them to learn things that run counter to their experiences, and they just have to learn it, no matter what, for the tests.

Amy Wilkins: More than thinking about Afrocentric curriculum, the thing we have to figure out is how you beat the racism out of black, white, Latino, Latina teachers, who have been inculcated with this idea that kids of color can't learn. You have to put the success stories in front of people's faces. You have to give them evidence, again and again, that these kids can learn. And that their teachers are not magicians. That they are mere mortals who are achieving good results for low-income kids and kids of color.

How important is it to recruit more teachers of color?

Adam Urbanski: There should always be a goal of improving the likelihood that students can see, in the adults in front of them, the reflection of their own experiences and possibilities. This can be accomplished without quotas and without restricting access to teachers who are not of the same racial makeup, but whose commitment and expertise would be enriching to students. What I think works best is an ongoing affirmative-action effort that seeks out the very best teachers and, when all things are equal, makes the extra effort to hire African-American and Latino teachers.

Harold Levy: There's a demographic shift going on, and it's happening all across the country. It's particularly pronounced in New York City: the aging of the white teaching force and its replacement by a teaching force of color. But we are also doing recruiting in a way that has never been done before by this city school system. We are sending recruiters to the traditionally black colleges. We are on the Internet in a way that no other system is. We have

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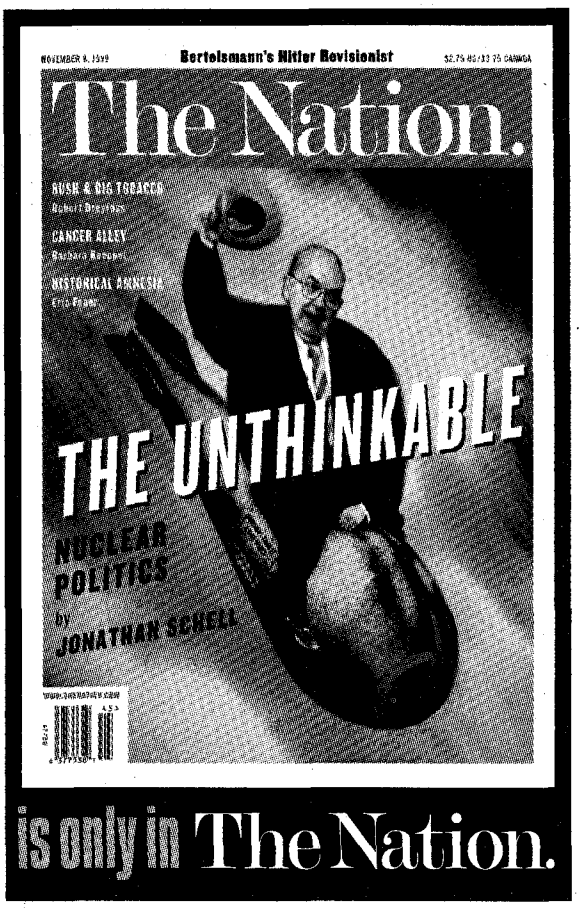
WHAT THE MEDIA ISN'T TELLING YOU

About Bertelsmann's Hidden Nazi Past In an exposé trumpeted coast to coast, *The Nation* revealed that Bertelsmann - the largest book publisher in the U.S. - has carefully hidden its stalwart complicity with the Third Reich.

About the Secret History of Lead In an exhaustive special report, *The Nation* showed how General Motors, Standard Oil and Du Pont colluded to make and market gasoline containing lead - a deadly poison - although there were safe alternatives. Abetted by the US government, they suppressed scientific evidence that lead kills. Still sold in countries all over the world, leaded gasoline continues to poison the planet.

About *The Wall Street Journal* Contrary to its self-assessment as "the world's most important publication," Gore Vidal noted for *The Nation* "just how unknown this cheery neofascist paper is to the majority of Americans."

About Arts Funding As columnist Katha Pollitt wrote, "the right-wing attack on the National Endowment for the Arts is playing to a small, if ferocious, constituency. Contrary to stereotype, Americans *like* the arts, and the more access they have to them, the more they like them."



About The Battle in Seattle. "Seattle was indeed a milestone of a new kind of politics. Labor shed its nationalism for a new rhetoric of internationalism and solidarity. Progressives replaced their apologetic demeanor of the past twenty years with confidence, style and wit."

About The Battle Beyond Seattle. As William Greider put it in his debut as *The Nation*'s national affairs correspondent, "Arrogance designed the WTO; arrogance will doubtless defend it. In the meantime, the WTO can serve as a splendid rallying point for popular resistance."

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taken out ads on CNN, in the airports. We have done all sorts of innovative endeavors to recruit minority teachers on the theory that we're a district where 86 percent of the children are nonwhite. I am very conscious of the need to have role models, but I'm even more conscious of the need to have credentialed, quality teachers. We have 78,000 teachers, and 11,000 lack teaching credentials. That, in my judgment, is an abomination. And it will impede us from performing at the levels the system is capable of attaining.

At the same time, we are banking on the altruism of college kids, because urban education is the equivalent of the Peace Corps of the sixties or the civil rights movement of the fifties. Attracting and keeping these young people is a matter of making the system less bureaucratic, more humane and more attuned to the needs of both the young teachers and the kids.

When people from outside the community are teachers, do they have to know more than just what's inside the school?

Lisa Delpit: Sometimes I tell my graduate students to imagine that they have just gotten word that they have to leave tomorrow to go teach in Eritrea, which they've never heard of. I ask them, What are you going to have to do in order to teach when you get there? And they go through a long list of things. The culture, the relationships between parents and children. They need to know the music, the literature, the stories and how people feel about them coming there, how people feel about Americans in general. Then I ask them, How would you find out? And they say they would live in the community. They would get an informant, a friend, somebody who could help them learn about it. They would go to the religious places, the shopping places, where people congregate. And I ask, how much of this information do you know about the children you teach? I try to get folks to understand how knowing the community and knowing the parents and the children is connected to teaching. They know that, but yet they don't seem to carry it over in their world. I think we all really know somewhere deep inside that in order to teach people, we have to know who they are and how they feel about us.

Does the "standards" movement have promise in improving education for poor children and children of color—and has it delivered on that promise?

Deborah Wei: My reaction to standards initially was, finally, someone is saying kids can achieve at high levels. There is no question that teacher expectation is low. But at some point, standards became a code word for a reinvention of tracking and exclusion, and what was supposed to be accountability of schools became punitive to students. Now we have things like graduation and promotion requirements and high-stakes testing, so kids can't go forward if they haven't reached these standards, but what happens to the schools, teachers and districts that didn't guarantee that these kids had access to the things they needed to meet the standards? Where's the opportunity to learn?

Luis Garden Acosta: As Gandhi said about Western Civilization, it would be a good idea. We ought to have standards in education. The problem is equating high standards with norm-based, high-stakes exams. Frankly, there is a good reason why private schools and schools that pride themselves on mastery and schools that promote young people to go to the Harvards and Yales and Stanfords of this world do not believe in those high-stakes tests, and yet, those of us who are poor and only have access to the public school system as it is today must endure what in effect becomes a real barrier to the education of our young people.

Amy Wilkins: The promise of the standards movement, I think, is terribly important. Until there were public standards, there was implicitly a multistandard system. A system where you had a set of standards for white kids and a set of standards for minority kids, a set of standards for affluent kids and a set of standards for poor kids. But folks who think the work of the standards movement is over are absolutely wrong. That was the easy part, writing the standards. Now the real work is about resource allocation, as in the distribution of good teachers between high- and low-poverty schools and high- and low-minority schools so that all kids can meet the standards.

Harold Levy: High-stakes testing to me is a way to insure that children are brought up to the highest level of performance that they are capable of, and it forces them to be rigorous in their thinking and to dedicate themselves to particular tasks. Those are the kinds of skills you need to be a full human being, just as much as having creative ability. It is very important to have the critical faculties that are tested by high-stakes testing. I'm not saying that we should use any old test or tests that can be beaten by test-cram courses. But I do think it's important that we hold ourselves to a high level of performance.

What role do the arts play in education, and is that role in jeopardy, given the current obsession with standards?

Lisa Delpit: In Georgia, in the schools that aren't doing well in reading and math, they are actually taking away arts and having kids spend more time on those subjects. But there's plenty of evidence that kids who engage in the arts do better on standardized tests anyway. Some kids who do poorly in reading have the most creativity. If you don't include the arts, you're going to prevent so many kids who are so talented from ever communicating.

Deborah Wei: What happens when art gets removed from poor communities and communities of color is that you have no way of naming your experience. And it's not like the mass media or anybody else is naming that experience.

Harold Levy: I don't see any incompatibility between high standards and creativity. But it was a terrible, terrible error to let the arts languish, particularly in urban communities, where the arts are so vibrant. There are more museums and theaters and creative arts people in the urban centers than anywhere else, and if you can hook the young, outgoing, interested, interesting teachers to those communities and make them see the inherent relationship between the creative act of teaching, on the one hand, and the arts, on the other, I think there's a shot at making the system perform in ways we haven't begun to consider. When I came onto the board, I brought with me two or three people, one of whom is looking at arts connections and cultural connections precisely because that's one of the key ways to enhance the system.

The idea that you could have no art or no music in New York schools is very revealing about what we think is important for poor children. The arts can be the hook that lures kids in, opens their eyes, catches their imagination in much the way that for other children sports or student government does. The mind is enormously subtle and variegated, and how you draw people in to be playful, to be intellectually venturesome, is what education is all about. ■

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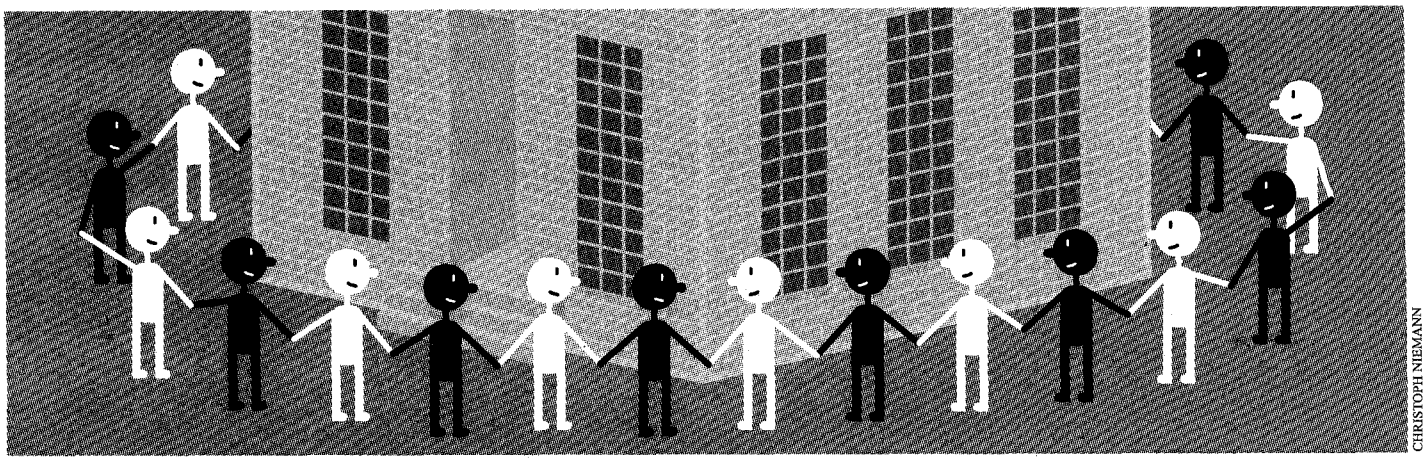
WHILE SOME CHARTER SCHOOLS THRIVE, OTHERS SELF-DESTRUCT. WHAT'S CLEAR IS THAT THEY CAN BE A TOOL FOR RACIAL JUSTICE, AND THEY NEED ALL THE HELP THEY CAN GET.



CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

Giving Charter Schools a Chance

JONATHAN SCHORR

Ask a supporter of charter schools whether that vogue new concept holds promise for inner-city children. By way of an answer, you might get invited to a quiet corner in the hard-scrabble Dorchester neighborhood of Boston.

There, in a building one could easily miss while searching for a school, a remarkable story is unfolding. Inside the warm, cozy classrooms of the Neighborhood House Charter School, the 180 students enjoy class sizes of 18 students—and two teachers. The student-teacher ratio, at less than 10 to 1, would be the envy of some expensive private schools; the typical public school ratio is 17 to 1. Founded by the local settlement-house network—a movement that has long offered services to ease the transition of new immigrants—the school serves as a center for healthcare, social services, after-school activities and adult education. A local newspaper reports, "Collaboration has been expanded beyond the building walls, and the entire community is recognizing the benefits."

New families are welcomed by a coordinator in the school's parent center, who visits homes and helps connect parents to services they need. The coordinator also oversees the "family learning contracts"—a promise parents sign to help with their child's studies, get their kid to school on time and help develop the child's "Individual Learning Plan." An independent evaluation notes, "Every teacher in the school makes detailed observations about each of his or her students every day. The teacher-student ratio is so low that most teachers have totally internalized the ILP of their individual advisees." Students attend school from 8 AM until as late as 6 PM, when adult education begins. And they attend with a vengeance, posting an impressive 97 percent attendance rate. No child has ever been expelled from Neighborhood House.

The student body, while not a precise mirror of the neighborhood, is mostly black and mostly poor; white students make up less than a third of the enrollment, and 51 percent of the students are eligible for a free lunch. Yet Headmaster Kevin Andrews, who worked as a principal in the posh Newton and Brookline suburbs, has brought the standards of affluent, largely white schools to the inner city. Despite a pay scale at least $5,000 below other Boston public schools—a trade-off for the small classes—he has attracted a staff dominated by experienced teachers. Many are graduates of Ivy League schools and hold master's degrees.

Among parents, he has tried to build the same sense of "entitlement," as he puts it, that prevails in the suburbs. Some parents accustomed to busing their kids to the suburbs, Andrews says, hesitated to raise their voices in those schools "to avoid blowing it." Here, he pushes them to fight for the best. The results have drawn national notice. On recent statewide tests—which despite all their limitations are the main measuring stick for the media and the public—Neighborhood House fourth graders outperformed every other school in Massachusetts in English and language arts. In math and science Neighborhood House took the top scores in Boston.

As for the latter numbers, only Andrews seems unimpressed. "Because they're the best in Boston, what's so wonderful about that?" he asked. "If we were testing like Newton, that would be wonderful."

It would also be wonderful if all urban charter schools were like Neighborhood House. They're not. Charter schools are independent public schools freed from most rules governing

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school districts and from the attendant bureaucracy. Instead of promising to follow a maze of regulations, they promise results, measured in student performance and parent satisfaction; that promise is embodied in a document called a charter. (Generally, charters must win approval from a local school board or state.) But while they exist outside the system, charter schools adhere to the definition of public schools: They cannot charge tuition, teach religion or discriminate in admission. Many charter schools were created to serve the needs of children who are not doing well in traditional schools. Nationally, charter schools enroll a higher proportion of poor and minority students than other public schools.

It's too soon to say whether charter schools, by and large, are better than the public schools down the street. The first charter school opened in 1992; most of the 1,700 now in existence opened in the last two years. Indeed, it would probably be a mistake at any point to try to draw broad performance conclusions about "the charter movement." By design, that "movement" is a collection of unique schools ranging from international baccalaureate academies to intensive last resorts for juvenile lawbreakers; taking their average temperature probably wouldn't be enlightening.

We have reached a curious pass when inner-city parents look to right-wing billionaires for help while liberals get tagged as hypocrites.

What's painfully clear, however, is that many inner-city charters aren't doing as well as Neighborhood House. In Oakland, California, for instance, several charter schools are struggling for bare survival. At one, a Latino-oriented school that was among the nation's first charters, a wrenching struggle for control between founding teachers and a new principal played out recently before local television cameras. Last summer parents picketed a small charter school for Native American students when it became clear the majority had failed and were being held back in their grade. And in April a third Oakland school, founded on ideals of tolerance and racial harmony, became the first local school to have its charter revoked amid heavy debts and multiple staff resignations.

Teeth-gnashing struggles like Oakland's, while not the rule, demonstrate a key early lesson of urban charter schools: If one hopes to create an effective inner-city school, good intentions, adequate resources, community legitimacy, a herculean work ethic and a ticket out of the bureaucracy may be necessary, but they are not sufficient. This desperately important task also requires wisdom, forethought, genius. These schools could use some help.

One might imagine this to be a natural area for progressives to get involved. Charter schools have much in common with the alternative schools of the sixties and seventies. They are about one-third the size of the typical public school. As a result, experimentation is easy, and a strong bond with the community is common. What's more, many charters are specifically designed to serve populations traditionally of concern to the left: poor and minority children.

Certainly, good numbers of progressive educators are vigorously involved in creating or supporting charter schools. Yet many on the left, inside and outside education, have been holding their collective nose at the charter movement. They cite a variety of fears about charter schools: They divert reform energy—along with dollars and other resources—from the larger system to schools serving tiny numbers of children; they drain off the active, involved parents who could help existing schools improve; they "cream" the best students away from regular schools, depriving classrooms of stars whose energy helps other children; they don't follow the rules made by democratically elected school boards and may themselves be less democratic; they are difficult for unions to organize, and sometimes they are actively hostile to collective bargaining; they could be a stalking horse for tax-funded vouchers and other anti–public school schemes; and they are sometimes irresponsibly selective, expelling children with discipline problems or avoiding those with learning disabilities.

There is some basis for each of these worries. Some charter schools do behave irresponsibly; some are backed by people with questionable motives. On the other hand, some of these concerns are overstated; charter schools don't get all the "best" students or parents, and often get the kids who have failed and the parents who have been most irritating to previous schools. Moreover, the argument about democracy falls flat when parents start their own school because they feel they have no voice in "the system."

More important is the question of charter schools' role in big-system reform. Despite charter advocates' hopes that the advent of such independent schools would bring vigorous change in surrounding districts, that has actually happened only about a quarter of the time. And unfortunately, the notion of charter schools as curriculum laboratories for the larger system has not yet been realized; right now, there's not much mechanism for transfer. But particularly under a vision where district reform and charters worked more closely together, charters could serve as experimental greenhouses to produce vibrant examples of public schools that work for poor minority kids. (One can only hope that amid the current standardized-testing mania, charters' need to demonstrate "results" will not drive out that experimentation.) Moreover, since many districts have been reluctant to embrace small, innovative schools despite their obvious benefits, parents and teachers who are not willing to wait for change within the existing public school system should be allowed to create charters.

Charters ought to be on the agenda for the left, in part because of their potential to serve as tools of racial and economic justice. Nationally, 52 percent of charter school students are nonwhite, compared with 41 percent of students at other public schools. Charters also serve a population that is slightly poorer than average. But the relationship between charter schools and children of color varies widely from state to state. In California and Colorado, for instance, charter school student bodies are whiter and wealthier than those of regular public schools.

On the local level, charter schools sometimes take a funhouse mirror to traditional race politics. In some Southern states, for example, parents in overwhelmingly African-American communities who want charters are being blocked by their traditional allies—the NAACP and the US Justice Department—because of fears that such single-race schools would open the way to segregation. On the other hand, there are reports of racist white

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school boards making racially motivated decisions on who can or cannot start a charter school. But such stories only seem to add urgency to the question: If charter schools can aid poor and minority children—as they do in Dorchester and elsewhere—can that opportunity be ignored? Progressives who remain on the sidelines of school choice risk finding themselves in an empty stadium. Parents and policy-makers alike are demanding change. Choice is not an open discussion anymore; the only question is in what form it will come. Charter schools are public, in name and in fact; many of the other options are not.

Political conservatives, and particularly corporations, have proved singularly unhesitant about staking claims in the realm of school choice. From privately funded private-school vouchers to for-profit charter schools to centrally managed, HMO-like "education maintenance organizations" with curriculum by E.D. Hirsch, the right has demonstrated its readiness to answer inner-city educational desperation. And plenty of parents are ready to sign on, as the torrential response to last year's privately

Smaller Is Better

Amid all the shouting about the failures of our public school system, and all the evidence that standardized-testing manias like the current one have not historically led to anything but short-term improvement in test scores, we know of another educational strategy that actually works—for all kids, but especially for the most vulnerable. There is growing consensus among educators on left and right about what distinguishes the best public schools, leading to a higher graduation rate, more successful college experiences and greater safety and health. Schools for low-income kids are more successful when they are small, when parents and teachers are together by choice, when there is a strong and coherent approach to schooling and when the adults in charge have a lot of authority to make important decisions. And all of this can happen inside the public sector, without charters, vouchers or privatization.

The success of the small-schools movement in New York City's public sector is a case in point, but studies nationwide replicate the good news. Examples include the Central Park East schools that I started in 1974, more than a hundred other schools now in New York City—including Brooklyn's El Puente, the School for the Physical City, Urban Academy, International High School, Beacon School and River East—the Pilot schools in Boston and the small-school developments in Chicago. Like other small-school students, those at Central Park East are at least as "at risk" as their counterparts at larger schools, but they are more likely to get a high school diploma and go on to successful college careers.

In a world in which too many kids of all races and classes are being raised without multi-age communities to help them learn what it means to be a wise or well-educated adult, all kids suffer. But some suffer more than others. Peter Steinfels reported in the *New York Times* recently that over the past three decades, just as demands for a good education have risen, families are spending twenty-two fewer hours together each week. During the same period, schools have gotten bigger and more anonymous. The closer kids get to being grown-ups, the fewer grown-ups they know well. They take classes with adults in the front of the room, but that's as far as it goes. Yet those kids who belong to special communities, such as extracurricular clubs, that include expert adults have a better chance at beating the odds of poverty.

That's what sets the successful schools apart—they create such communities for all kids. It's not even their particular approach to curriculum and pedagogy that makes them work. It's that the schools are organized to maximize the power of the adults who know the kids best, the strength of their ties with kids and families, and their ability to put together a coherent schoolwide pedagogy and curriculum. They are built around a unique culture, one that wraps kids and adults together in a shared system of values.

In schools like Central Park East, even high school teachers are rarely expected to be responsible for more than forty or fifty students, and they stick with the same kids for many years. The faculties are small and know each other well. The schools are small enough—between 100 and 400 students—for the adults to meet together around a single table and argue things out until they more or less agree. The kids know their teachers well and know that they, like the faculty, are responsible for the work of the school.

The critics say it won't work if applied on a large scale. But it certainly won't work if we keep crippling such schools, putting them down and writing rules that are intended for a big, one-size-fits-all comprehensive school. The bulk of resources and attention is now directed at reform by testing, instead of giving small schools the critical help they need to get off the ground. In a big school there are many secretaries, assistants and deans to respond to central administrative forms, meetings and mandates, whereas a small school can't afford that. So while large schools proliferate, dozens of small schools across the country are right now biting the dust, and we are undermining the ability of others to follow their path.

The critics say the data on small schools are too soft and the approach too mushy. While students at small schools do only slightly better on tests, it turns out that it's the test scores that are mushy. The more we "teach to the test" the more unreliable the results become as predictors of success. The assessment systems most small schools rely on—consisting of oral defenses, portfolios and exhibitions—are better predictors of life success. Real-life hard data—high school graduation rates, college attendance and future work opportunities—all favor small schools, above all for poor and minority youngsters.

Test scores always go up for a while when we decide to focus on tests. But within three to five years they'll plateau, and soon after they'll fall back to where they started—and we'll bemoan again the failure of those intractable city schools. We'll debate whether it's the fault of the kids, their families, their teachers, their unions or the wrong pedagogy. But we will once again have missed an opportunity to use what we know works.

DEBORAH W. MEIER

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funded Children's Scholarship Fund vouchers proved. The potency of the choice message—and the feebleness of the response—was crystallized, as E.J. Dionne Jr. of the *Washington Post* pointed out, in a February presidential debate in Harlem. There, applause thundered through the Apollo Theater when a reporter questioned Al Gore for opposing vouchers but sending his kids to private school. "Is there not a public or charter school in D.C. good enough for your child?" she asked. "And, if not...why should the parents here have to keep their kids in public schools because they don't have the financial resources that you do?"

Meanwhile, a growing movement seeks to run public charter schools for profit, spearheaded by Edison Schools, which manages seventy-nine schools in sixteen states, plus the District of Columbia. The push to make money from public schools has raised considerable alarm on the left, but here too one finds surprising alliances. Edison was the early favorite of Mayor Jerry Brown to open charter schools in Oakland. And Edison is working with the University of Wisconsin, among others, on a charter school that would help prepare African-Americans for that university's medical school and careers in science.

Progressives ought to give their own flavor to the charter movement, aiding in the creation of excellent, model schools.

We have reached a curious pass when inner-city parents look to right-wing billionaires and well-heeled corporations for help while Democrats and progressives get tagged as hypocrites and sticks-in-the-mud. But liberals need not abdicate their place on the educational cutting edge, and ought not be seen as defenders of bureaucracy and failure. Charter schools present an opportunity to do the right thing, politically and morally. There is a need here, as evidenced by the struggles of inner-city communities to start their own schools, and progressives ought to answer the call, giving their own flavor to the charter movement. People—and particularly educators—of conscience can lead by example, aiding in the creation of excellent, model schools.

These schools need plenty of thoughtful help getting off the ground. The problems of many struggling schools can be traced to inadequate preparation. Schools—even small ones—are complex beasts, like cities or hospitals, and what may seem like tiny gaps in planning can become real chasms after the school is open. In her illuminating forthcoming study "Parents Founding Charter Schools," University of San Francisco Professor Patty Yancey describes how the founders of the pseudonymous C-Star Charter, unified by purpose, good intention and urgency, glossed over nettlesome details of bylaws and contracts. At the time, the documents seemed little more than bureaucratic irritants. In an experience repeated over and over by charter schools, however, that haste came back to haunt the parents and teachers. They found they had handed governing power to an autocrat and that there was no grievance system. Halfway through the first year, parents were meeting in secret; by spring, the principal had been fired, and the school nearly went bankrupt. The academic year closed with the resignation of the school's two teachers and the departure of half its families. Although it is probably safe to say that most charter schools never face problems that serious, this kind of power struggle is not unusual.

There is a conundrum presented by money: Generally, charter schools receive funds only when students arrive. That means any work before the school opens must be done on the cheap. The best schools, on the other hand, pay staff for a year or more before admitting students, and then start very small—with numbers so low that they do not cover initial costs. Some of the difference is now being made up by grants, including more than $137 million this year from the federal government. Probably as a result, only 40 percent of charter schools complained of problems with start-up funding last year, down from 60 percent three years earlier. Even so, some thoughtful grant-making in this area would go a long way. Given sufficient time and opportunity, school staffs can find the unity they will desperately need later in everything from discipline policies to basic trust. And of course, extra time would allow them—before facing the hassles of installing sprinklers and choosing carpet colors—to do their most important work: developing a compelling plan for educating children and for deepening the skills of the teachers.

It is no surprise that the charter schools that have their act together the most—that is, the ones least likely to face disaster—are in the states that conduct the most exacting review before granting a charter. In states that are less demanding—ones with a large number of charters, like California and Arizona—progressive educators should serve as "critical friends" to charter schools, evaluating plans for curricular depth and seriousness, helping school leaders sharpen their vision and strengthen their methods. By the same token, schools-to-be need the help of lawyers, businesspeople, educators and other good thinkers who can apply a magnifying glass and a reality check to budgets, contracts, school policies and recruitment plans. Each school has a board, where strong, thoughtful, critical people can make the difference between success and disaster. And anyone who goes to the voting booth should support state charter laws that focus on creating the best environment for kids—not the most convenient compromise for powerful adults.

For anyone involved with a nascent school, whether peripherally or centrally, there are some principles that should be considered crucial. The first is vision. People who want to make a school must know why. They must know, simply and precisely, what they want to achieve, what sort of world they want young people to inhabit. The vision will be reached only if it is known and shared by everyone at the school. The second point is unity. Using their shared vision as a rallying point, adults must agree on the key principles and policies on which their school is built. They must trust one another. If that bond is not strong enough, it will be frayed by inevitable strains—racism, the lack of time and materials, mischievous children and angry parents—and chasms will develop into which children will fall.

Third, the classroom must be the focus of the school's attention—a seemingly obvious point often ignored amid concerns about finding a building and paying bills. In curriculum, charter schools can be laboratories for the innovative, the risky, the unusual; that opportunity should not be squandered. Such important classroom work can be sustained only through high-quality professional development. Like surgeons and pilots, teachers must continually develop their craft, whether in their first year or

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their thirtieth. And finally, there are the personal principles of hard work and balance. Anyone who comes to an innovative new school should be prepared to work hard, but no one should be made to burn out.

A generation ago, progressives were the guardians of innovative education for children who needed education the most. Through helping to create superb independent public schools, they can return to their place in the vanguard. It's not just a politically savvy way to fight the enemies of public education. It's the right thing to do for children. ■

NO ONE REALLY KNOWS HOW CHILDREN IN MILWAUKEE'S VOUCHER SCHOOLS ARE FARING.

Who's Vouching for Vouchers?

BARBARA MINER

Cammillia Mays is an African-American single parent who, like millions of parents across the country, faced a difficult decision when her daughter turned 4 years old. Where should she send her to school?

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

She had heard of Milwaukee's voucher program, under which public tax dollars can be used by low-income parents to send their children to private schools. The idea of a private school sounded good.

But after two years Mays switched her daughter to La Escuela Fratney, a public school in Milwaukee. And she has no regrets.

"The difference between Fratney and the private school is dramatic," she says. "You can't even compare in the sense of the one-on-one attention at Fratney, the teacher involvement, the sense of security, the level of education, parent involvement, the sense of organization."

"I have to be honest," she adds. "It was not what I expected from a public school, based on the negative stigma that is attached to the Milwaukee Public Schools."

Milwaukee, which ten years ago instituted the country's first voucher program, is often called "ground zero" in what is one of the most contentious issues in education—whether to provide public dollars to private schools, including religious schools. This is thanks in part to the pivotal support of the right-wing Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, which is based in Milwaukee. Over the years, the Bradley foundation (which also financed *The Bell Curve*) has poured millions of dollars into the struggle for vouchers in Milwaukee—helping to pay legal bills in defense of the program; funding advocates of vouchers, especially in the African-American community; and financing a think-tank study extolling the virtues of vouchers and marketplace approaches to education reform.

Using the seductive rhetoric of choice and opportunity, voucher supporters have wooed those most disserviced not only by public schools but by every other social institution—African-Americans and Latinos. And there is little doubt that many low-income parents, especially those who have the time and resources to shop around for the best school for their child, support the idea of getting public money to go to a private school. But it's equally clear that after a decade of vouchers in Milwaukee, many parents, like Cammillia Mays, are not ready to give up on public education.

About 8,000 low-income students currently receive a publicly funded voucher of up to $5,100 to attend one of ninety-one private schools taking part in Milwaukee's voucher program. In 1998–99, religious schools were allowed to take part for the first time, completely transforming the program into one predominantly serving religious schools. (About 70 percent of the voucher students attend religious schools.)

What are some of the lessons that can be learned from Milwaukee's experience?

§ *Lesson Number One*: Vouchers drain money and support from the public schools. The Milwaukee voucher program, which this year costs $39 million, is not funded separately but comes directly out of state dollars that would otherwise go to public schools. At the same time that public dollars are going to private voucher schools, the state has imposed spending limits on public schools—which, in the case of Milwaukee Public Schools, has led to a $31 million deficit this year. One of the many contradictions is that under current Wisconsin law, school districts may raise local property taxes to help pay for the voucher program, but cannot raise taxes similarly to meet the needs of public schools.

§ *Lesson Number Two*: Vouchers do not necessarily foster improved academic achievement. While vouchers have been presented as a way to help provide educational opportunities for African-Americans, the reality is that no one really knows how students in the private voucher schools are performing academically. A report this February by Wisconsin's nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau pointedly noted that "some hopes for the [voucher] program—most notably, that it would increase participating pupils' academic achievement—cannot be documented." Voucher schools are not required to give the same standardized tests demanded of public schools, and even when they do, they are not required to release the scores. Twenty-eight percent of the voucher schools in 1998–99 were not accredited or seeking accreditation or subject to any independent review of educational quality. Available evidence points to a private school system that

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includes some good schools, some mediocre schools and some substandard schools. This year, three of the voucher schools are so substandard that even the Milwaukee pro-voucher group Partners Advancing Values in Education will not provide scholarships to the schools.

Interestingly, in the past three years there has been another experimental program in Wisconsin targeted at low-income students—this one to reduce the class size in kindergarten through third grade. In contrast to the voucher program, the class-size initiative can document improved academic achievement. In its recently released third-year report, the program, known as Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE), showed that students in small classes performed statistically higher across all grade levels in comparison with a control group of students in non-SAGE classrooms. Gains were especially noteworthy for African-American students. African-American third graders in the program, for example, narrowed the gap between their achievement and that of white SAGE students, while in the non-SAGE schools the gap widened.

§ *Lesson Number Three*: Voucher schools are not accountable to the public. The voucher schools argue that because they are private, they get to play by different rules than the public schools. As a result, voucher schools do not have to provide any data on test scores, suspension and expulsion rates, teacher certification or teacher salaries, and the education of bilingual and special-education students. They don't even have to hire college graduates as teachers. Further, voucher schools are allowed to circumvent basic constitutional protections such as free speech, due process and equal protection. They also argue that they are exempt from a state law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation and pregnancy, and marital or parental status.

If a parent prefers that his or her child attend an integrated school, it's even hard to get information on the racial breakdown of voucher schools. Private schools are not required to release such data.

To date, much of the church/state controversy over vouchers has centered on concerns that public dollars are being funneled into religious education (currently, vouchers remain in legal limbo because the Supreme Court has not ruled on whether they violate the separation of church and state). But the First Amendment also protects religious institutions from government "entanglement"—in other words, from the government dictating how religious institutions should operate. An unresolved legal dilemma is whether demands that voucher schools play by the same rules as public schools will violate prohibitions against government "entanglement." If so, what will win out: demands for public accountability or religious freedom for voucher schools?

§ *Lesson Number Four*: Voucher schools do not necessarily serve all children. One of the most contentious issues in Milwaukee has involved special education. By law, the private schools are not required to provide the same level of special-education services as public schools. According to the Legislative Audit Bureau report, in 1998–99 only 3 percent of the voucher students had been previously identified as requiring special services, compared with about 15 percent of public school students. The report went on to note that voucher students are more likely to receive services that are relatively low in cost, "such as those needed for children with speech and language disabilities or learning disabilities."

Only two of the eighty-six voucher schools studied in the report provided bilingual education. And only about 38 percent of the voucher schools provided transportation for students, which helps insure equal access. James Hall, a board member of the Milwaukee branch of the NAACP, fears that in the long run "the public school system will be a last-resort dumping ground, or at least it may be perceived that way. And perception unfortunately can become reality."

§ *Lesson Number Five*: Parents do not necessarily want to abandon the public schools—they want them to work better. Despite ten years of vouchers, African-Americans and Latinos have not flocked to the private schools. In Milwaukee there are only 1,359 more blacks in private schools than four years ago; during the same period, the number of African-Americans in the public schools increased by 4,419. Nor did the voucher schools, as a group, enroll as many students as their capacity would have allowed, according to the Legislative Audit Bureau report.

It's revealing that a large number of African-American parents have exercised their choice to attend a suburban public school rather than a private school within Milwaukee, under a state-funded desegregation program known as Chapter 220. Currently some 5,500 students take part in the program. During 1998–99, there were three times as many applications from students of color as available seats in the suburban districts. The continuing popularity of the program, which began in 1976 and is the longest-running "choice" program in the state, demonstrates that African-American parents do not necessarily dislike public schools per se but want their children to attend well-funded, quality public schools. In the Milwaukee area, as in most urban areas, suburban schools spend significantly more per pupil than city schools.

Advocates of public school reform find themselves in a complicated position. On the one hand, they must continue to expose the problems in public schools and demand that they provide a quality education to all children. On the other hand, they must defend the institution of public education as a public good and expose voucher plans for what they are—essential building blocks in a conservative agenda to privatize our schools and remove them from public oversight and responsibility.

Currently there are three voucher programs in this country—in Milwaukee, Cleveland and Florida—in which public dollars are used to pay tuition at private schools, including religious schools. But voucher bills are on the docket in more than twenty states this spring. At a time when our urban schools need to commit themselves to equity and high standards for all children, vouchers promote a mentality of escape, individualized advancement and abandonment of responsibility for the collective good. African-Americans would be among the first to lose under such a system. At best, vouchers are a temporary solution for a limited number of children—but with no accountability, even that is not guaranteed.

Milwaukee Democrat Gwen Moore, one of two African-American state senators, argues that until now, there's been a "feel good" approach to discussions about vouchers, keeping the discussion at the level of pleasant soundbites. "But I think the morning after is coming, after this big party.... We're feeding on our public institutions, and it's the public schools that are the only guarantee that all children are going to have some basic level of education." ■

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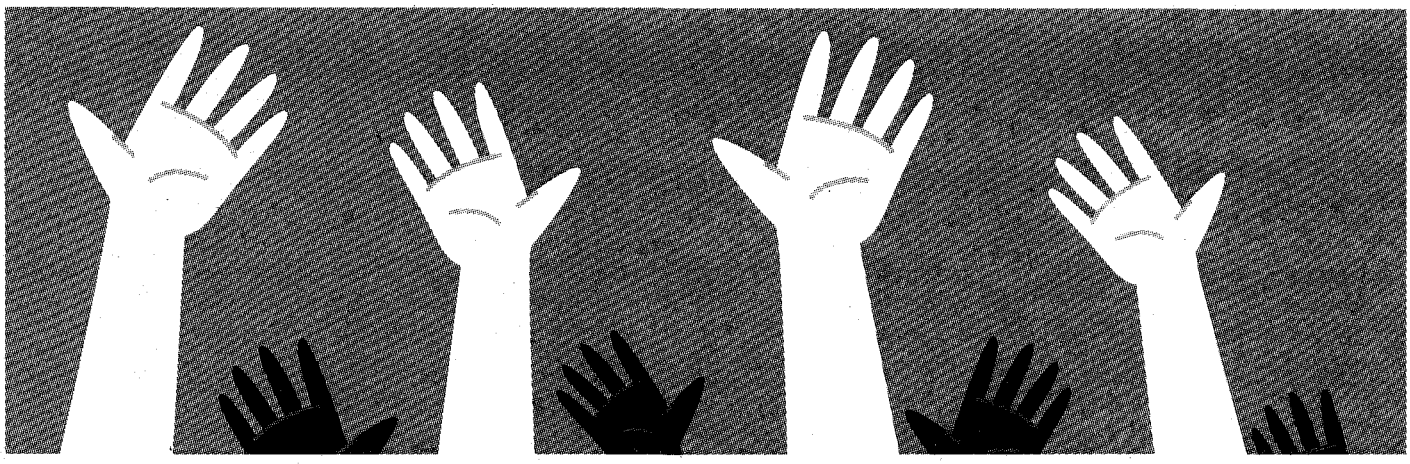
MONTCLAIR, NEW JERSEY, IS KNOWN FOR ITS RACIAL DIVERSITY AND GOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS. SO WHY ARE STUDENTS OF COLOR LAGGING BEHIND?



CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

Race in Class, After Integration

LISE FUNDERBURG

Evelyn Gay is a computer programmer for Prudential Insurance; mother and wife; modern-day race woman (co-founder of a small but thriving African-American education fund); and a solid member of the upper middle class, having surpassed her parents (to their great pride) in both education and income. She lives in one of the country's handful of renowned integrated communities, Montclair, New Jersey, and if there were a slot in the upcoming municipal elections for town booster, she would be a shoo-in.

"There is demand to move here," she says of Montclair's reputation for harmonious race relations, "and there are plenty of lily-white suburbs where the houses are cheaper, right in this vicinity, that white families could just move to if they wanted to. But the demand is to move to Montclair. So that means the type of people who move here have a very special mindset."

Yet good intentions, the town's residents have discovered, can't insulate them from broader societal problems. Last September Gay was shocked to read two newspaper accounts of the racial achievement gap in Montclair, where, despite their parents' financial success and advanced degrees, many black children are still testing lower than whites [for an analysis of the nationwide disparity, see Pedro Noguera and Antwi Akom, page 29]. In Montclair's public schools, according to one article, only 54 percent of black ninth graders scored above half of the total test-taking population on a recent standardized reading test, compared with 95 percent of white students. Math scores were only slightly closer.

"That really, really just upset us terribly," Gay says of the black middle-class parents she knows. Generally, Montclair citizens are known for their activism—a quick perusal of the local paper shows countless task forces and coalitions—but an unprecedented number of efforts to address the achievement gap have formed in just the past few years. Gay credits the news stories for galvanizing the fifteen or twenty black parent-organizers of a new effort that will be launched this summer. The Community Tutorial Committee, as it is currently known, will offer as many as ninety children SAT preparation, general tutoring, subject-based field trips and exposure to African-American role models whose professional achievements demonstrate the payoff of doing well in school.

The program's multifaceted design stems in part from the complex nature of the problem—"If this were easy," says Montclair Assistant Superintendent Dr. Jean Pryor, "we would have fixed it a long time ago"—and the complex makeup of the town. In the 1990 census, Montclair (pop. 37,487) was 66 percent white and 31 percent black—a mix that has roughly held for more than thirty years. Along with its vibrant arts community and proximity to New York—former Brooklynites regularly run into each other at the town's two Starbucks—Montclair's diversity and voluntary magnet-school program make it an increasingly desirable suburb. Though concrete data are scarce, most observers see an entrenched, multigenerational black working and middle class, a growing black upper middle class and, despite skyrocketing real estate values, a concurrent swell of black poor fleeing the decay of nearby Orange, Irvington and Newark. Montclair's once vibrant Italian-American poor and working-class contingent has all but disappeared, putting, for all intents and purposes, a black face on poverty in the town.

Physical integration was once thought to be the solution to racial inequities, but in Montclair, where that has been more or

Lise Funderburg is working on a book about race and class in long-standing integrated communities.

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less achieved, the spotlight shifts to even more insidious—and difficult to repair—consequences of uneven distribution of resources and opportunity. Within the interstices of race, class and community—laid bare precisely by virtue of such extensive physical integration—Montclair's black middle class seeks solutions to the achievement gap.

Arthur Powell, 46, a mathematics professor at Rutgers University and father of a fourth-grade boy in one of Montclair's seven elementary schools, regularly meets three friends—all African-American men, all successful in their field—for Sunday morning breakfast at Montclair's Midtown Diner. Two years ago, over plates of eggs and waffles (and real maple syrup, which they bring in), the conversation made its way to the black middle school students they knew. Many were not receiving honors at graduation and seemed to be shying away from accelerated programs. The reason, Powell and his friends surmised, was that to do so would put them on the outs with their friends.

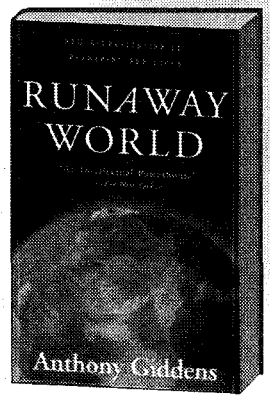
The four men decided to attack that anti-academic culture. They started the fully grassroots—no funding, all volunteer—Montclair Youth Enrichment Program (MYEP). Each Saturday morning, they spent three and a half hours with twelve black middle-schoolers—nephews, neighbors, friends of neighbors. As a draw, they initially offered SAT-preparation tutoring, but early on they found that despite good grades, the children couldn't handle the prep materials. "So we backed up," Powell says. MYEP redirected its curriculum toward math, reading and current events, and included parent conferences and counseling on how to navigate the school system. Over the course of the year, as MYEP revealed more deficits in the students' education, parental dissatisfaction grew. By spring, Powell notes, there was an unanticipated result: "Parents of half of the kids switched them into private schools."

Another unexpected outcome was the discovery of an apparent work-ethic differential between low-income and middle-class minority kids, which further complicates the long list of factors academics use to explain the gap. "We noticed that middle-class students did not work as hard as students who were from poor backgrounds," Powell says. He links the lax attitude to being first-generation middle class. "They have an image of themselves that says, 'My parents have it all, I'm fairly well taken care of, and this will go on into the future.'" What the kids don't realize, Powell believes, is that newcomers to the middle class lack the cushion of generations of accumulated wealth. "The kids aren't aware that if both parents were to lose their jobs, they're probably just six months away from not being middle class."

Being middle class and black today isn't the same as it was a generation ago, says Evelyn Gay. Gay's parents were middle class, but neither went beyond high school. Still, they always expected her to go to college, she says, even if they didn't have the experience to guide her through the process. In a planning meeting for the community tutorial program, Gay mentioned to the other parents that while she was growing up in Newark, schools were open year-round—not true in Montclair. "So I would go to summer school," says Gay, now 47, "and take courses before I got them in regular school. When I said that, others raised their hands and said that was one of the ways they prepared themselves for coursework their parents couldn't help them with."

Gay also believes changing cultural influences have reshaped

"An Intellectual Powerhouse" —The New Yorker



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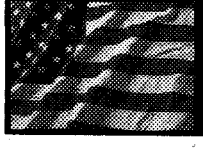

THE GRADUATE PROGRAMS AT Suffolk University
A HIGHER DEGREE OF CHOICE

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the social challenges today's black children face. "We were energized by the civil rights movement," she remembers. "And we saw ourselves in a totally different way from the way kids see themselves now. They're more influenced by this hip-hop nonsense." (Gay likes the beat well enough, but not what she views as the music's glorification of gangster and drug culture.)

Gay's neighbor, Sandy Byers Harvin, 44, is the mother of twin ninth-grade boys who attend Montclair High School. Harvin, an editor at the *New York Times*, volunteers with Gay on both the education fund and the new tutorial program. "I've had pretty positive experiences," Harvin says of the town's schools. "But I think that in Montclair, as anywhere, we have to be eternally vigilant. We deal with our children's education just as any parent would, but at the same time, we have to anticipate and recognize when they have problems that arise because of perceptions that people have of them." This won't please Montclair's we-are-the-world idealists. "People in this town who are not raising black children may not want to hear that," she says, "but it is a truism."

'We've moved away from the finger-pointing and the blaming to where not just the schools but the community owns the problem.'

Vigilance, according to Harvin, includes digging around for the useful tips that are passed along on soccer field sidelines and at dry cleaner counters, such as knowing that parents have a say in whether their children take high-honors math courses. "It's like an oral tradition," she says. As another black parent notes, even if it's not intentional on either side, many middle-class blacks in Montclair aren't privy to the inside information and "guerrilla tactics" that whites of the same class share.

After much deliberation and hesitation, Arthur Powell and his wife, a political scientist at Hunter College, decided that next year they'll send their son to a predominantly black private school in Newark. This move conflicts with Powell's belief that black middle-class children and parents should stay connected with public education. "The kind of influence we can exert is important," he says, "and I think it's important to have a multiclassed school." He also thinks that all children benefit from being part of an integrated town—which is why he'll retain a seat on the new tutorial program's board and restart MYEP in the fall—but the positives didn't outweigh a long list of concerns, including safety, overcrowding and low expectations.

Low teacher expectation had been an issue all along—his son, an early reader, was in kindergarten half the year before the teacher realized he could read. "And she was a good teacher," Powell says. But now his son has begun to confront low peer expectations. "I don't see the principal of his school or any of the other principals as capable of tackling the problem," he says. "And we simply don't want him to grow up thinking that African-American kids aren't achievers."

It's not that the district isn't trying. Assistant Superintendent Pryor speaks of achievement gap issues with palpable concern. "If acting white is smart," she says, referring to one of the gap's identified causes, "then what, in the name of God, is acting black?"

Montclair seems to be aiming at every possible solution, small, large and in-between. Pryor and Superintendent Michael Osnato belong to three task forces—including the national Minority Student Achievement Network, which is working with the College Board to devise strategies for closing the gap. Osnato has firsthand knowledge of managing diversity from having been one of a few Irish Catholic kids in Jewish-majority schools in the Bronx. In his second year with the district, he has developed a reputation for reaching out to parents and contingents often left out. Furthermore, Osnato supports Montclair's longstanding practice of publishing test scores, which some districts refuse to do.

"I'm a firm believer that data produce change," Osnato says. "What are we hiding?"

Pryor, who dealt with years of backlash when the test results were first released, understands other districts' reluctance. "When you put out data that show your white kids in the 90th percentile and your black kids in the 60th," she says, "be prepared for a flogging. But you can't fix what you can't face." Over the years, Pryor notes, the response has changed. "We've moved away from the finger-pointing and the blaming to where not just the school system but this community owns the problem."

"We can't address all of the root causes," concedes James Gaither, a Colgate-Palmolive manager and parent who has volunteered to chair the tutorial program. "But if we can get some of the kids turned around, then we're a success."

Overall, Pryor, who's worked in Montclair schools for ten years, seems hopeful. "We're on the right track," she says. "It's just that the train isn't moving fast enough." Pryor also subscribes to the prevailing opinion that no panacea exists. "An after-school tutorial program is great," she says. "But by itself, is that gonna do it? No."

Montclair's demographic jumble presents unique challenges, but appropriate ones, says Pryor, "if we're going to be a microcosm of what the future's going to be for our kids. I take personal and professional pride in our ability to prepare young people for what the world is becoming. Kids who come through Montclair High School see kids who are bright, who are different, who look different, who speak different languages. Everybody who goes there doesn't see himself in the mirror every day."

Osnato's strategy includes promoting groups outside the district walls—he initially called together the parents who went on to formulate the tutorial program. He says he's trying to create ombudsmen, but he's also acknowledging that some steps, such as the inculcation of high expectations, the district alone cannot take.

"I don't want to make it sound like we've got this all sewn up," Osnato says. "We don't. But we're working to create a coalition." Osnato is also mindful that coalitions can't be exclusive in a community as diverse as Montclair, one where the high property taxes largely support the schools, conferring a widespread sense of ownership over each dollar spent. "You can't project—nor should you, in an integrated community like this—that your only interest is the African-American student," he says. "You have to build a system that represents your entire clientele. So the dilemma here is advocating for the needs on the minority achievement gap while attracting and retaining the middle-class

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Caucasians. Also, you gotta be careful that you do not lose the upper-class African-American population. What you've really got to do is project that you want to elevate the standards for all. I think people understand that. I hope they do."

James Gaither, who has three children in the public system, sees the participation of children from all racial and ethnic backgrounds as essential to the tutorial program's success, even though it was initially conceived as a response to low black scores. "I think we will lose a lot of support if we say we are targeting a specific ethnic group," he says.

Educator, activist, father and Montclair native son Kabir Baber does his own share of bringing children together, but he also credits Superintendent Osnato for uniting parties interested in tackling the gap. Baber, 47, will help with the new program's parent outreach, but also runs a highly regarded mentoring and tutoring program called Project Success (initially targeted at black children but now open to all). He says that while the inequities of education are formidable, this town has the best chances of remedying them. "If you can't do it in Montclair," Baber says, "you won't be able to do it anywhere." Even though the population is diverse, they're "hungry and eager to make sure all children learn," he explains. Indeed, middle-class black parents aren't the only ones involved in the effort to improve the schools—it's just that the recent data have provided a new, focused call to arms. "So that's why I don't have a problem sitting at the table with Dr. Osnato or anybody else," Baber says, "they all want to level the playing field."

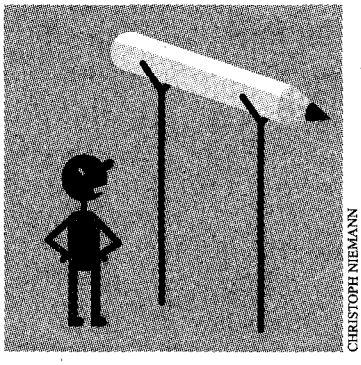
The playing field has proven itself to be a minefield, but still one that many Montclair parents enthusiastically traverse. "We know it's not that our kids aren't smart," says Evelyn Gay. "We have kids come out of our schools who go to the best schools in the nation, and they may not be the children of parents with economic means or educational backgrounds. So there's got to be a way to address this." ■

CAUSES OF THE RACIAL ACHIEVEMENT GAP ALL DERIVE FROM UNEQUAL TREATMENT.

Disparities Demystified

PEDRO A. NOGUERA AND ANTWI AKOM

Once again national attention is focused on the racial gap in academic achievement, thanks in part to the high-stakes tests now in vogue across the nation. The appearance of this racial gap is by no means a new development. For years, African-American, Latino and Native American students have lagged far behind their white and Asian peers on most standardized tests. The gap is also present in graduation and dropout rates, grades and most other measures of student performance. The consistency of such patterns in almost every school and district in the country has the effect of reinforcing well-established assumptions regarding the relationship between race, academic ability and intelligence.



CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

More often than not, explanations for the achievement gap focus on deficiencies among parents and students. Dysfunctional families, lazy and unmotivated students, and the "culture of poverty" in inner-city neighborhoods are all frequently cited as causes of the gap. Left overlooked and unaddressed are the conditions under which children are educated and the quality of schools they attend. Since popular explanations often determine the types of remedies that are pursued, it is not surprising that the renewed attention directed toward the racial gap in academic achievement has not led to calls to address the real problem: inequality in education.

Pedro A. Noguera is a professor in the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University. Antwi Akom is a doctoral student in sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. Both have been active in educational reform work in the San Francisco Bay Area.

First, it's important to recognize that achievement test results reflect more than just racial disparities. An analysis of test scores also reveals a close correspondence between the scores children obtain and broader patterns of social inequality. With few exceptions, children of the affluent outperform children of the poor. Explaining why poor children of color perform comparatively less well in school is relatively easy: Consistently, such children are educated in schools that are woefully inadequate on most measures of quality and funding. This is particularly true in economically depressed urban areas, where bad schools are just one of many obstacles with which poor people must contend. Parents often perceive inner-city public schools as hopeless and unresponsive to their needs, prompting those who can to opt for private schools. Many have also actively sought alternatives through vouchers and various privatization schemes.

Yet what makes the racial gap uniquely paradoxical is the fact that the benefits typically associated with middle-class status don't accrue to African-American and, in many cases, Latino students. In many school districts, children of color from middle-class, college-educated families lag significantly behind white students in most achievement measures. The performance of these relatively privileged students has brought renewed attention to the relationship between race and educational performance. This is the issue that has prompted fifteen racially integrated, affluent school districts [including Montclair, New Jersey, whose experience Lise Funderburg describes on page 26] to form a consortium called the Minority Student Achievement Network.

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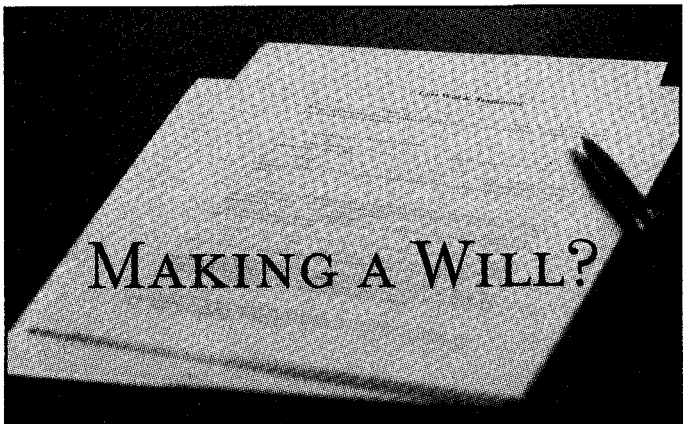

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With the support of researchers assembled by the College Board, the network, comprising districts in such communities as White Plains, New York, Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Berkeley, California, seeks to understand the causes of the racial achievement gap and to devise solutions for reversing it.

On the face of it, the potential for success in reducing the gap in these districts would seem high. All fifteen school districts in the network have a track record of sending large numbers of affluent white students to the best colleges and universities in the country. Additionally, unlike schools in high-poverty areas, funding is largely not a major obstacle to reform. Each district is located in an affluent community with a highly educated population known for its commitment to liberal political and social values. Yet in all fifteen districts there is a persistent, deeply ingrained sense that even this ambitious and well-intentioned effort will fail to alter student outcomes.

The pessimism in these districts, and in others that have launched efforts to overcome the racial achievement gap, must be understood in historical context. In many areas greater emphasis has been placed on how to achieve racial integration in schools than on how to serve the educational needs of a diverse student population. Even in the liberal districts in the Minority Student Achievement Network, some of which were among the first in the nation to voluntarily desegregate, the arrival of significant numbers of students of color in the late sixties and early seventies met with considerable opposition. From the very beginning, the presence of African-American children, especially those from low-income families, was perceived as an intrusion, and because the children were perceived as disadvantaged and deficient in comparison with their white schoolmates, educating them has always been regarded as a challenge. Since students of color were framed as "problems" and "challenges" from the very start, it is hardly surprising that they would continue to be treated as a problem requiring special intervention years later.

Moreover, educational practices often have the effect of favoring white students and hindering the educational opportunities of African-Americans and Latinos. This is particularly true when it comes to tracking and sorting students on the basis of ability. A large body of research has shown that students of color are more likely to be excluded from classes for those deemed gifted in primary school, and from honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses in high school. The Education Trust has shown, through its research on science and math education, that even students of color who meet the criteria for access to advanced courses are more likely to be turned away based on the recommendation of a counselor or teacher. They are also more likely to be placed in remedial and special-education classes, and to be subject to varying forms of school discipline.

A close examination of access to AP courses in California reveals how certain educational practices contribute to the maintenance of the racial achievement gap. Since the mid-eighties, the number of AP courses available to students at high schools in California has tripled. This increase has been attributed to a 1984 decision by the University of California to give greater weight to the grades earned by students who enroll in AP courses. However, AP courses are not uniformly available to students. At some inner-city and rural schools, few if any such courses are offered, while at private and affluent suburban schools,

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it is not uncommon for students to have access to fifteen or more AP courses [see Alan Jenkins, "Leveling the Playing Field," March 6]. Moreover, our own research at Berkeley High School has shown that even when minority students are enrolled at schools that do offer a large number of AP courses, they are more likely to be actively discouraged from taking them by teachers and counselors.

Beyond the policies and practices that contribute to the achievement gap, a number of complex cultural factors are also important. Missing from the research and policy debates is an understanding of the ways in which children come to perceive the relationship between their racial identity and what they believe they can do academically. For many children, schools play an important role in shaping their racial identities because they are one of the few social settings where kids interact with people from different backgrounds. To the extent that a school's sorting processes disproportionately relegate black and brown children to spaces within schools that are perceived as negative and marginal, it is likely that children of color will come to perceive certain activities and courses as either suitable or off-limits for them.

Given the history of racism in the United States, it would actually be more surprising if a racial achievement gap did not exist.

In schools where few minority students are enrolled in AP courses, even students who meet the criteria for enrollment may refuse to take such courses out of concern that they will become isolated from their peers. The same is true for the school band, newspaper, debating team or honor society. When these activities are seen as the domain of white students, nonwhite students are less likely to join. Peer groups play a large role in determining the academic orientation of students, not to mention their style of clothes, manner of speech and future career aspirations. For middle-class African-American and Latino students, this means that despite receiving encouragement from their parents to do well in school, the peer group with whom they identify may push them in a different direction.

There are also cultural factors related to the attitudes and behaviors of students and the childrearing practices of parents that influence student performance. Several studies, for example, have indicated that middle-class African-American and Latino students spend less time on homework and study in less effective ways than middle-class white and Asian students. Also, despite the visibility of African-American students in sports such as football and basketball, research shows that these students are less likely to be involved in other extracurricular activities (which are shown to positively influence achievement), and in their responses to surveys they are more likely to emphasize the importance of being popular among friends than doing well in school.

Finally, images rooted in racial stereotypes that permeate American society limit the aspirations of African-American and Latino students. Despite the daunting odds of success in professional sports and entertainment, many young people of color believe they have a greater chance of becoming a highly paid athlete or hip-hop artist than an engineer, doctor or software programmer. And with the rollback of affirmative action at colleges and universities, there is little doubt that students who possess entertainment value to universities, who can slam-dunk or score touchdowns, will be admitted regardless of their academic performance, even as aspiring doctors and lawyers are turned away.

When placed within the broader context of race relations in American society, the causes of the racial achievement gap appear less complex and mysterious; the gap is merely another reflection of the disparities in experience and life chances for individuals from different racial groups. In fact, given the history of racism in the United States and the ongoing reality of racial discrimination, it would be more surprising if an achievement gap did not exist. If the children of those who are most likely to be incarcerated, denied housing and employment, passed over for promotions or harassed by the police did just as well in school as those whose lives are largely free of such encumbrances, that would truly be remarkable news.

Lest recognition of the racial achievement gap drive us into greater despair about the prospects for eliminating racial inequality in America, we must also recognize that to the extent change is possible, it is more likely to occur in education than in any other sector. This is because despite its faults, public education remains the most democratic and accessible institution in the country. In fact, in the post–welfare reform period, it is virtually all that remains of the social safety net for poor children.

Moreover, there are schools where no achievement gap exists, and there are students who achieve at high levels despite the incredible odds facing them. These bright spots of success reveal what might be possible if we lived in a society that truly valued children and was genuinely committed to equity and high-quality education for all.

Realizing such an ideal would require a comprehensive effort to reverse the effects of racial and economic inequality in the classroom, but it might begin with a few basic, though costly, measures: (1) significantly raising salaries so that teaching would be an attractive career for the best college graduates; (2) insuring that poor children have access to well-qualified teachers from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, and to schools with adequate resources; and (3) providing parents in low-income areas with the means to exert greater influence over the schools their children attend. These are not radical measures. Indeed, they are already features of schools in most middle-class suburban communities. But bringing them to low-income areas would require states to address the huge disparities in funding that arise from the way schools are financed throughout the country. Since the electoral defeat of former New Jersey Governor Jim Florio in 1993—the last major elected official to make a serious attempt to address such inequities—few have been willing to take on this critical issue.

Despite the defeats such measures have suffered in the courts and at the polls, politicians do recognize that the public is deeply concerned about improving the quality of education, and as they clamor to position themselves as friends and supporters of education we must demand that they address questions of equity. For those of us who believe that public education can serve as a source of hope and opportunity, the time is ripe for making our voices heard so this historic opportunity is not missed. ■

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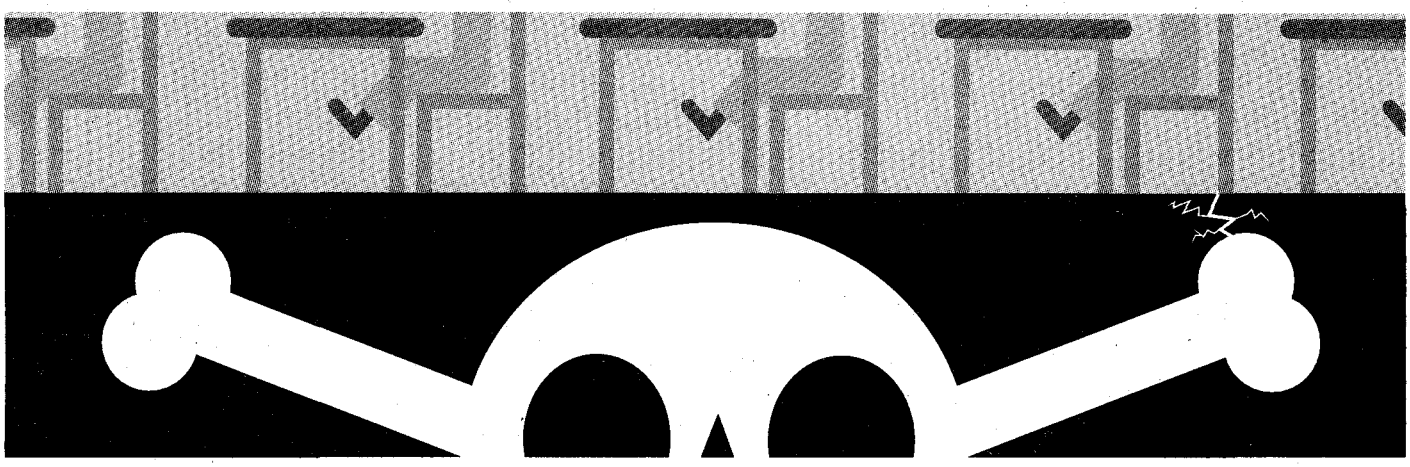

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

The School That Wasn't: Politics and Pollution in LA

SUSAN ANDERSON

Los Angeles

Fernando Contreras points to the area behind a green mesh fence where his family home used to be. He is about to be a grandfather for the first time. Still, he is a youthful-looking man with brown, wavy hair, wearing the uniform of the candy factory where he works. At the top of Boylston Street Contreras stands with his brother John and recalls the roomy, three-bedroom home with two garages and a laundry room where they grew up. A nearby elementary school is named after their deceased aunt, Betty Placencia, a beloved teacher's aide and community leader. The mostly Latino Temple Beaudry neighborhood is one of the poorest areas in Los Angeles, within sight of the grand skyscrapers on Bunker Hill downtown. Where the Contreras home once stood there is now a huge, abandoned construction site. Its focal point is a half-built peach-and-beige-colored brick building towering over hills of dirt, wild mustard, scattered trash and tumbleweed.

This site was to be the home of the Belmont Learning Complex, called the most expensive school in America, with its $200 million price tag. The development was originally conceived in 1985 by the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) as a middle school to alleviate the severe overcrowding in the area. The project ballooned into a planned thirty-five-acre, state-of-the-art, Internet-wired senior high campus, with a shopping mall to jump-start commercial development in the area, 120 affordable apartments to address the housing crunch, classrooms and innovative "academies" for 5,000 students.

More than ten years later, however, the Belmont development is mired in controversy over "waste, fraud and abuse" (as one state assemblyman put it), lack of accountability and the public's discovery of what at least some in the school district already knew—that explosive methane gas, poisonous hydrogen sulfide, volatile organic compounds such as acetone, the carcinogen benzene and residual crude oil saturated the earth where the school was being built, on top of a former oilfield and industrial site.

The scandal generated a centrifugal force felt throughout the city. Three members of the Board of Education known as supporters of Belmont were ousted in elections last year and replaced by members who voted in January to fire the developers and shut down the project. The new board has retained the services of attorney Thomas Girardi—of Hollywood's Erin Brockovich fame—to compile a malpractice lawsuit against the school district's former real estate counsel, O'Melveny and Meyers, arguably the city's most influential law firm. The blue-chip accounting firm Ernst & Young is one of several corporations accused of either overbilling the school district or "breaching" their "professional duty." By the time construction was stopped, more than $123 million had already been spent on the school.

Despite all this, many of the city's most powerful Latino leaders are pushing to resume construction on the site. Belmont has become the flash point in the district's race to build desperately needed schools. Overcrowding, what educators call "the seat problem," is at catastrophic proportions in Los Angeles. The district is growing by 15,000 students a year and must add 150 new facilities over the next six years. Most of the growth is a result of the rapid increase of immigrant students from developing countries, primarily Mexico and Central America, many of whom come from families below the poverty level and whose parents often cannot read or write in their native language. These huge demographic

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shifts were projected but ignored; the district has built only one comprehensive high school since the seventies.

The Belmont fiasco "didn't spring out of nowhere," in the words of David Koff, a senior research analyst for the Hotel and Restaurant Employees union, which has been critical of one of the project's developers, Kajima. The scandal emerged from the deal-making ambitions of district employees, their cronies in the business world and school-board members like Victoria Castro, board president at the peak of the scandal, who worked behind the scenes to switch the location of the new school to the Belmont site, which is in her district, and who believed, in Koff's assessment, that the massive Belmont complex would be "a stepping stone" to higher office (she recently ran, unsuccessfully, for a seat in the State Assembly). More broadly, the board and the district proved systematically unaccountable to the public as they pursued what Koff calls "Belmonster" in the face of mounting environmental and financial problems. The result was not only the squandering of precious resources that belonged to public schools but also an erosion of public trust that the new board is still struggling to recover.

The scandal emerged from the deal-making ambitions of district employees, school-board members and their business-world cronies.

A report by Don Mullinax, LAUSD's Inspector General, released this past fall chronicles the events leading up to the scandal. By August 1989 the Board of Education had approved land acquisition for what was then a plan to build a middle school on an eleven-acre parcel in Temple Beaudry. As early as 1990, the district knew of the dangers there. The Phase I environmental study found that there was "a potential for environmental problems associated with explosive/toxic gases and subsurface soils contamination" from up to thirty-four improperly abandoned oil wells dating from the late nineteenth century, underground oil tanks built in the forties that might have leaked into the soil and groundwater, and paved surfaces under which hazardous waste, solvents and paints were stored. The state's Department of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources gave "a bleak picture of the Temple/Beaudry site" to district managers and to O'Melveny and Meyers counsel David Cartwright. Cartwright himself noted in a letter the state's opinion that "the Temple/Beaudry site is not fit for any construction."

Yet the school district persisted in its plans, continuing with further environmental analysis. Despite concerns about safety, the district managed to get state approval for its "mitigation and monitoring plan" and even received state funds, which it used to acquire the eleven acres in 1993. Soon after, facing mounting pressure to accommodate thousands of new students—and driven by its own ambitions to develop a project expected to generate millions in retail sales—the district purchased an additional twenty-four acres for $30 million in state money.

Former kindergarten supervisor Dominic Shambra, who was overseeing the project, rushed it through the environmental review process. Once all the parcels were in place, the district publicly revealed its new development scheme, a massive, multi-use project including a high school, affordable housing, community space and up to 78,700 square feet for retail. In 1995 a staff "evaluation team" recommended Temple Beaudry Partners as the developer on the deal—a firm in which Kajima, a multimillion-dollar client of the district's own real estate counsel, O'Melveny and Meyers, is a partner. The winning proposal was the most expensive presented to the district, projecting nearly $114 million in costs. Shambra called it the "Cadillac" among competitors. The agreement struck by LAUSD with the project developer shifted the costs for "hazardous material remediation" to the school district and indemnified the developers against any claims arising from these materials. And it contained none of the escape clauses customary in contractor agreements.

The district broke ground on the Belmont site in June 1997. Environmental problems continued to plague construction. The developer was informed by a state agency in March 1998 that pockets of highly explosive methane gas existed throughout the Belmont site and were not, as believed, limited to certain areas. This report was buried by the developer. Six months later the same agency informed the school district about the methane discovery.

Last spring, the California state legislature convened hearings on the Belmont development. They concluded that LAUSD may have violated various laws and that the state could "pursue feasible civil and criminal actions against offending individuals." Finally, in January 2000, the newly elected board voted to kill Belmont, citing the combined environmental and financial problems, the absence of guarantees of environmental mitigation and the "wildly varied" estimates for toxic remediation, from $10 million to $60 million. In April of this year, state and city attorneys found that there was no evidence to pursue criminal indictments relating to Belmont's environmental problems. The US Attorney's office has yet to announce its decision. It remains to be seen what these agencies find regarding the accusations of financial malfeasance.

The school that was to be replaced by the new construction stands on a steep incline in the collection of hills west of downtown, surrounded by dilapidated apartment buildings. Aging cars in need of paint jobs line the curbs. The hood yawns on a rusted barbecue grill. Across the street, a yellow fire hydrant leaks water. In the morning air, as school begins, a rooster crows persistently.

The main building on the current campus was constructed in 1923. Along with more recent additions, it inadequately houses 4,888 mostly Latino and Asian students. Another 2,653 students from the area are bused out, 1,000 voluntarily to attend magnet schools, the remainder because Belmont doesn't have space for them. It's commonly said that Belmont, like a lot of other schools in LAUSD, is so crowded that the kids have to walk down the halls sideways. That's folklore. The atmosphere at Belmont is calm, even friendly, as students move to their first-period classes. It is, in some ways, like any other high school, filled with goofy laughter, boys and girls walking in same-sex clumps and the hollow-sounding voice of the principal echoing through the public address system. A closer look reveals signs of neglect: padlocks and chains on the tables and benches in the lunch area, exposed plumbing, peeling paint and coatings of grime over every surface.

Gloria Soto is the mother of a current student and an alum of

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Belmont. A school-district employee, Soto is a leader of the vocal group agitating to resume construction on the new site. She sits in the campus Parent Center, an expansive speaker and obviously effective politician. Soto says that when former district officials "showed us plans for a modern school, there was a lot of excitement. The vision that was brought to us was unexpected. We said, Wow, to be able to have this kind of thing in our community." But, Soto adds, "little did we know how much is involved in building a new school. LAUSD, parents, nobody had real, true experience at this kind of complex. But we felt we were pioneering into the future. And the need was there."

Not only did the construction promise a desperately needed new school that would act as a magnet for area development, but Soto's group worked with the district through a longstanding program to provide apprenticeships on the site. "We got people hired before they even began construction," she says, and eventually trained seventy-five people at $10 an hour, some of whom went on to permanent jobs in the industry.

Many of the city's Latino leaders want the district to resume construction on the school, asserting that 'these are our kids.'

Soto believes that the environmental problems on the new site can be "mitigated," a word that comes up often when people talk about reviving Belmont. Her complaints aren't just about the lack of a new high school; the "new board members are not as inclusive as previous board members," she finds. "I expected to have had more dialogue and more background into what has happened." And, she believes, politicians "used Belmont as a political platform. And that was painful to this community."

Fernando Contreras also feels betrayed by the political process around Belmont. As he and his brother John survey the ruins of their old home on Boylston Street above the Belmont site, Contreras remembers being surprised when the Board of Education approved the massive Belmont complex. Turmoil disrupted the area. In 1997, six streets were closed and property was condemned or claimed under eminent domain. The Contreras home was among those demolished. Even the neighborhood parish, Holy Rosary Church, where Contreras led an antigang youth group, was razed despite the protests of congregation members. Contreras left the neighborhood. "I couldn't deal with Belmont," he says. "This is where we barbecued and my kids rode their bikes. Tornadoes, earthquakes and gang members didn't drive me out. Belmont did."

To Contreras the issue is not the environmental hazards on the school site but throughout the whole neighborhood, which rests atop an area once teeming with oil wells. He and his brother recount tales of relatives who died suddenly from burst blood vessels, of children born with disabilities, of their own childhoods filled with diseases, like whooping cough, that "people don't get anymore." When Contreras was 10, he got sick playing on the field where Belmont now stands and went home with a high fever. "My whole body peeled like a snake. They told me it was scarlet fever." As kids, when they got off the bus from school near the corner of Temple and Bolyston, the current Belmont site, the "fumes were so strong, we used to hold our noses and run home." Contreras testified before the board against the project. He says he understands a school is needed in his old neighborhood, but "it's not worth the kids' getting sick." If the project does get built, he says, echoing last June's report of the LAUSD School Safety Team, "you don't know what's going to happen twenty, thirty years from now. You don't know the long term. What good is an education if you get cancer in ten years?"

It is Soto's position, not Contreras's, that is reflected in the public stance of many of the city's Latino leaders, who assert, in the words of Antonia Hernandez, president of the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund, "These are our kids." Hernandez says that MALDEF is contemplating a lawsuit against the district. City Council member Mike Hernandez, County Supervisor Gloria Molina, State Assemblyman Antonio Villaraigosa, who is running for mayor in next year's election, and Congressman Xavier Becerra, also a mayoral candidate, are the loudest voices pushing to revive the project. Molina recently offered the district a million dollars in public appropriations to pay for further environmental tests, and Villaraigosa has also lobbied for state funding for such tests. Molina, along with Arturo Vargas, executive director of the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, and Antonio Gonzalez, president of the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project, argued in a recent *Los Angeles Times* Op-Ed that "there is simply no justification to support abandoning the Belmont Learning Complex" and that the board's action "doomed thousands and thousands of young people to an inadequate education."

Yet according to an April *Times* poll, there is an apparent disconnect between these leaders and the rest of the Latino community: The survey found that a majority of residents in the part of the district near the school support the decision to kill the project. The only area where a majority favor completing Belmont is the San Fernando Valley, because residents don't want Belmont kids bused to already overcrowded schools there.

In March, Howard Miller, newly appointed chief operating officer of the district, presented more than five new possible sites in the Belmont neighborhood to provide seats for at least 7,000 students. The advantage of these sites, Miller asserts, is not only that they are cleaner than Belmont but the construction can be funded out of recently approved bond money instead of the general funds the district used to pay for Belmont—millions drained from teacher salaries, student supplies and other critical budget items. The other sites also reflect the growing trend away from huge, warehouselike structures and toward smaller, more neighborhood-friendly campuses. But the process of building new schools with bond money has been plagued with delays, in part because of longstanding problems in the district's financial systems. In response, Miller has threatened to call in the Army Corps of Engineers to help the district build the schools it needs.

The Belmont scandal has finally focused needed attention on the problem of overcrowding in LA public schools. This year MALDEF, along with the Asian Pacific American Legal Center, joined a lawsuit challenging state school spending practices as unconstitutional. The state's "first come, first serve" funding system ignores the crying need for new schools in urban areas like LA, in order "to build empty schools for imaginary kids" in suburban and exurban areas, as lead attorney Connie Rice puts

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it. Rice argues that the same kind of backroom deal-making between public officials and developers that went into the Belmont mega-complex operates at the state level, preventing needed schools from being built. (The sad irony is that the LA school district actually failed to apply for its share of state bond money. Nearly half of those funds have already been spent elsewhere.)

For the past fifteen years, instead of expanding available school facilities, LAUSD has coped by putting nearly a third of LA's schools on a year-round schedule, increasing capacity by forcing up to three sets of students to use the same classrooms on staggered schedules. But the district is about to run out of even recycled seats. If 150 schools aren't built in six years, the macabre joke goes, students, bused to less crowded campuses, might simply ride all day because there will be nowhere for them to go.

The new board president, Genethia Hayes, has announced that "it's never going to be business as usual ever again," and the board has set a heady pace for change. In addition to identifying new school sites, in April it unanimously approved a dramatic restructuring program that would cut nearly half of the district's 2,000 administrative jobs and set up eleven autonomous, decentralized mini-districts. It expects to hire a new superintendent by June. It recently engaged in contract negotiations with a wary United Teachers of Los Angeles over the issue of tying teacher compensation to student performance, and is implementing a new reading curriculum throughout the district.

The board's rush for change is seen by many as a long-overdue response to a district in chaos, symbolized by Belmont. For many Latino leaders, however, no matter how many public meetings board and top staff attend, this board's cards may be on the table, but they're being dealt from underneath. Some Latino leaders continue to demand that the board pay for a study of the Belmont site by the State Department of Toxic Substances and Control, a study Miller halted after the board ended the Belmont project.

The frustration is justified. Latino students fare worse than others; in addition to overcrowded campuses they have higher dropout rates and lower test scores, higher teen-pregnancy rates and greater incidence of poverty. MALDEF's Antonia Hernandez speaks of "the feeling of isolation" from the city's power structure among Latinos. The demand to continue construction on Belmont is not just about overcrowding; it's about the Latino community asking for the same degree of public investment that other parts of the city enjoy. At the same time, however, low-income Latino neighborhoods are chronically undermobilized and lack the basic civic infrastructure found in other poor communities. As knowledge of the serious environmental risks in the Belmont area grew, some Latino leaders argued that "Belmont can be made safe for our children" because many homes, businesses, and schools in the area stand on the same abandoned oilfields. But no one surveyed the area and investigated the kind of long-term health effects Fernando Contreras believes his family has suffered. No one organized the residents to protect themselves.

For a long time, the Board of Education was the last place expected to be the source of change. Its buildings on Grand Avenue downtown offer a view of Los Angeles at its most staid. To the east, against a backdrop of corporate skyscrapers, cranes are busy on the lavish reconstruction of a cathedral damaged in the 1994 Northridge earthquake. To the north, the grille of lights around Rupert Murdoch's refurbished Dodger stadium reflects the sunlight. Big money and old leadership surround the mismatched sixties-era buildings housing the board and central staff. But the board's defiance of the city's power players belies the appearances here.

Opponents say they feel the new board is not as "responsive" as the previous one. But the old board's close relationships with powerful members of the community masked an environment in which greed and incompetence flourished despite what current board president Hayes calls "the damage done to children." LAUSD is the second-largest school district in the country, with a budget of $7.7 billion, bigger than that of the City of Los Angeles. It includes 711,000 students, 67,169 regular, full-time employees, and 650 campuses. Underlying the overcrowding crisis is dismal achievement. More than two-thirds of LA schools ranked at 3 or below, out of a possible 10, on this year's statewide Academic Performance Index. The API confirmed the suspicions of the new board; even showcase schools that educators believed were beginning to close the gap between inner-city and privileged students are failing. In the words of district COO Miller, speaking from his modest office at board headquarters, "People who say they are most concerned about kids have done them enormous harm by [being] patronizing to them. They didn't want to hurt them, cause them pain. And they were not giving the kids a chance to succeed. There is this huge feeling that you can't make urban education work."

The new board must balance demands for openness and community input with a commitment to both equity and excellence in the school system. According to the recent *Times* poll, 83 percent of all residents in the district "believe change is possible, offering district officials a potential reservoir of goodwill as they try to implement reform." LA's educators are studying the considerable achievements in the neighboring Inglewood school district, made up overwhelmingly of low-income Latino and African-American students. There, test scores equal or rival those of privileged students. If the current LA board succeeds in shifting priorities from serving the greed of bureaucrats to the needs of children, they may help show, as an Inglewood principal put it, "You don't have to be white and rich to learn."

In the meantime, what he calls the board's "tough" stands have

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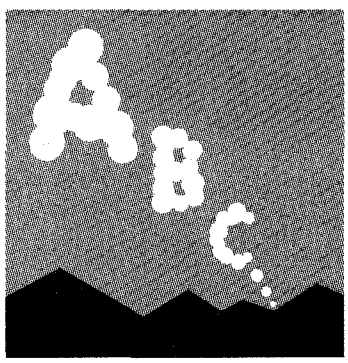
surprised Fernando Contreras. He says that Belmont was known as "a Taj Mahal. People called it a cash cow. I call it the Trojan horse because people thought it was a gift but it was the death of my neighborhood. What about the houses around here? They don't have any mitigation." Contreras feels that the objections he and others raised weren't heard because the people who represent the area are bent on keeping the project alive. Contreras stands on the street watching kids play nearby. His brother John leans on a car fender. Contreras gestures up the hill to the ramshackle houses. "Nobody," he says, "is listening to us." ■

TRIBES FACE AN UPHILL BATTLE TO BLEND CULTURE WITH TRADITIONAL COURSEWORK.

Teaching (Native) America

BRIAN THOMAS GALLAGHER

"How many of you can name one of the Backstreet Boys?" I ask William Cornelius's sixth-grade social studies class at Indian Community School (ICS) in Milwaukee. Dozens of shouts: "Howie"—most students name at least two—"Kevin." "Who was the first President of the United States? Who is the President now?" Naturally, they all know. "Who is Oshkosh?" I ask. "A clothing company," blurts one kid. "A city up north," spouts another (Oshkosh was the Menominee chief who testified before Congress in 1848 so his tribe could keep its Wisconsin homeland). I continue, "Hippies? John F. Kennedy? The Beatles?" Again they all know. "Russell Means? Dennis Banks? AIM?" "They make soup," one student offers nonsensically, before asking, "Are you Indian?" When I say no, a girl slumped low in her desk says curtly, "*We're* not even Indians anymore."



CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

There it is—the obiter dictum that bespeaks the current state of Native American education, which is still deeply troubled after more than a hundred years of struggle. In many ways, the girl is right. She and her classmates dress and talk in the same pseudo-urban way that characterizes students of all races, from downtown Portland to suburban Baltimore. And these kids are among the few attending an all-Indian school that focuses heavily on integrating culture into the curriculum. Ninety percent of Native American students attend non-Indian schools, public or private, where culturally aware teaching is sorely lacking. Many believe the loss of traditional native knowledge and language is intimately related to the problems of high dropout rates and poor academic achievement. "It's all tied up with identity and cultural dissonance," says Rosemary Christenson, a professor of American Indian Studies at the University of Wisconsin and an Ojibwa Indian. "The effects of that cultural dissonance are widespread and continue to grow."

The search now is for a balance between Indian culture and Anglo academics that prepares students for success in both the native and mainstream realms. The particular difficulties of finding this balance are as varied as the educational situations of Native Americans, who may constitute either a small part of a large urban student population, a large part of a small rural student body or the entire student body of a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) school. Each situation carries its own complex set of qualifiers: the vitality and size of the local Indian community, funding mechanisms, language barriers and more. Additionally, Indian student bodies often comprise members of several, sometime dozens, of tribes—each with a distinct language, customs and history. But in too many schools and districts, the gestures toward cultural curriculum are based on stereotypical notions of monolithic Indianism—the noble or downtrodden, even simple-minded, Red Man.

Indian educators like ICS executive director Linda Sue Warner, a Comanche, think teaching kids about Indian culture can be complementary to traditional academics. "I don't see that there's anything wrong with reading and writing and calculating and measuring," she says wryly. Her school—whose motto is "Blending books with drums"—doesn't teach these subjects at the expense of Indian identity (or vice versa) but rather uses the two areas to reinforce each other.

The purging of tribal cultures, traditional knowledge and language, once actively undertaken by the government, is now much more effectively conducted passively, by a combination of television consumerism, socioeconomics and the educational system. The homogenizing influence of popular media continues to take its toll, while Native Americans are increasingly defined by their income bracket and all the problems associated with poverty—unemployment, violence, substance abuse—rather than their ethnic identity. With the fragmentation of extended Indian families and tribes, the unwritten knowledge of elders that was once a counterweight to Anglo hegemony is in danger of being lost. In many instances schools have become the primary place where Indian children may learn about their own culture—or may not, which is more often the case.

On the wall of the Gallup-McKinley Schools administration building, in a 14,400-student district with a 76 percent Native American, mostly Navajo, population, a timeline of New Mexico history done by elementary school students depicts only one Native American event—the surrender of Apache chief Geronimo. At Gallup's John F. Kennedy Middle School, there is little evidence of the majority culture in the school's common area—aside from the droves of Indian students bustling through the halls. Norman Roach, a teacher there and Sioux former student of BIA schools,

Brian Thomas Gallagher lives in New York City.

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said, "Most of the teachers in the district ignore Indian culture"—a sadly common evaluation by Indians of public education.

It was the school's namesake, JFK, who initiated the study that ultimately appeared as a 1969 Senate report declaring the education of Native Americans "a national tragedy" and calling for more tribal involvement in schools. Until then, the federal government's policy on Indian education had been largely a campaign of culture cleansing, defined by cruel boarding schools and misguided stereotypes. Students were forcibly removed from their families and taken hundreds of miles away to schools where they were stripped of their native dress and often beaten for speaking their own languages. Since the Kennedy report, Indian education has been stumbling slowly toward self-determination. In 1972 the Indian Education Act, also known as Title IV, provided funds for special programs for Native American students in both reservation and public schools. Three years later the law was amended to require the involvement of Indian parent committees in those programs, but the success of these programs varies widely, and models are still being sought.

'The culture is the base. If the kids feel bad about themselves or can't deal with their own history...then school is difficult.'

Today there are 185 schools funded by the BIA. Of those, 116 are tribally controlled through grant or contract agreements, while sixty-nine are still operated by the bureau. The ratio has been reversed from twelve years ago, and the control of the bureau schools is slowly shifting to the hands of tribes. However, the contracting process was authorized thirty years ago, and only in 1995 did the majority leave federal control. The shift has afforded more opportunity for cultural curriculum, but funding and staffing are ever-present problems.

"We know that language and culture can be the centerpiece of a school, and other academics can swirl around that," said Dr. John Tippeconnic, a Comanche/Cherokee Indian and director of the American Indian Leadership Program at Penn State University's College of Education. New Mexico's Santa Fe Indian School is a model for this kind of education; its graduate list comprises an all-star team of Native American leaders. In 1977 the school, then called Albuquerque Indian School, became the first operated by a tribal entity under contract with the federal government. The year before that, the dropout rate was close to 50 percent. Today the dropout rate is 2 percent, and 80 percent of graduates go on to higher education, some at schools like Princeton, Dartmouth and Stanford.

Superintendent Joseph Abeyta, a Santa Clara Pueblo Indian, attributes much of the success to the involvement of the Indian community, which is frequently consulted on the curriculum. At SFIS students work on irrigation engineering projects that incorporate oral history from elders about ancient watersheds. "The kid is realizing that that grandpa knows more than the Princeton engineer," said Abeyta, who warned against token attempts to introduce Indian culture. "Someone will include *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* and say, 'I've got a culturally relevant literature class,'" he said. Pictures of graduating classes over the last fifty years line the walls of the SFIS administration building, reflecting the school's transition from federal hegemony to Native American self-determination. The early photos, dating from the days of BIA operation, show boys in suits and stark white shirts, girls in knee-length skirts and saddle shoes—all of them looking strangely absent. Recent pictures show kids in native dress, ribbon shirts and moccasins, smiling broadly.

The students at ICS and SFIS are the exception. Even Gallup's dearth of in-school culture is mitigated by the proximity of the Navajo reservation, where culture and language are very much alive. Countless Indian students don't even get *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*. In urban areas, where half of non-reservation Indians live, Title IV school programs have been largely ineffective. In these schools Indians constitute a small percentage of the entire student population, usually the smallest of the minorities—often with members of many tribes among them—and are often short-changed. In Seattle the 1,361 Indian kids make up 2.9 percent of the student population. Twenty percent drop out of high school, nearly twice the rate of the district at large. In Minneapolis, where the 2,390 Native Americans are about 5 percent of the population, they miss twice as many school days as white kids each year. Of the Indian students attempting to graduate this year, 32 percent have not passed the test Minnesota requires for a diploma.

While many districts and states, including these, do have programs for teaching Native American culture—like Wisconsin's Act 31, which says that all students must hear about Native Americans three times during high school—Professor Christenson believes most are inadequate. "Although there have been efforts in particular places, it's pretty much catch-as-catch-can," she said. "Indian kids have been stuffed into white man's education, and once in a while a pail of water is thrown over them that's supposed to be a cultural bath. It's just an appeasement."

But some urban public schools have managed to strike a balance between culture and academics. At the Native American Indian Center of Stockton Unified School District in California, director Dale Fleming, a Cherokee/Lumbee, and his all-Indian staff of six work closely with Indian parents and the community to instill in the district's population of 1,600 Indian students a strong sense of their heritage. In 1986 the dropout rate for Native Americans in Stockton was approaching 100 percent. Today it is 7 percent. "The culture is the base," said Fleming. "If the kids feel bad about themselves or can't deal with their own history or who they are, then school is real difficult." The students participate in weekend and summer programs with Indian elders, where academic subjects such as engineering, math and biology are taught from a Native perspective. "The kids we've seen that have a handle on both cultures do much better," Fleming said.

In the latest of a long series of efforts to confront the problem of Indian education, the BIA's Office of Indian Education Programs, the US Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services and several nongovernmental agencies are working to establish a research agenda for Indian education. A preliminary conference was held in Albuquerque in April, and the agenda is expected to be ready by February 2001. Also, the Indian Community School has founded an Urban Indian Education Research Center at its campus in Milwaukee and has given

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$1 million to endow a professorship in Native American education at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. The state university system will match the endowment for another professorship.

"It's a survival issue for native people," says Carlotta Bird, the director of instruction at Zuni Public Schools in New Mexico, an Indian-controlled public school district. Hers is a recurring sentiment among Indian educators. For although their numbers are small, Indian students represent the next generation of their tribes. Unlike immigrants, Native Americans have no preserved point of geographic and cultural reference, no "old country." It is only in America that the traditions and languages of Indian tribes live and die. ■

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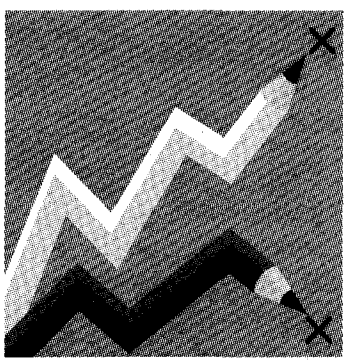

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

With education among the electorate's top priorities, the phrase "higher standards" has become ubiquitous in political campaigns across the country. Ever since the publication of the Reagan Administration's *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, the standards-based school reform movement has galvanized a broad coalition from right to left. Conservatives and business leaders are drawn to its pledge to improve the accountability of a public school system they see as an entrenched bureaucracy, as well as to its goal of preparing a more globally competitive work force. At the same time, the movement's underlying premise, that all children can learn at high levels, has won over many liberals and civil rights advocates, who are rightly concerned about teachers and schools lowering their expectations for poor and minority students.

Unfortunately, this movement has all too frequently been reduced to a single policy: high-stakes testing. This policy links the score on one set of standardized tests to grade promotion, high school graduation and, in some cases, teacher and principal salaries and tenure decisions. To date, about twenty-five states have adopted some version of this policy, and the number of legislatures considering similar measures is growing. Both Al Gore and George W. Bush vigorously promote the use of standardized tests. President Clinton recommended in his State of the Union address that test-preparation manuals be made available to all children.

Yet despite the political popularity of the testing "solution," many educators and civil rights advocates are suggesting that it has actually exacerbated the problems it sought to alleviate. They claim that these policies discriminate against minority students, undermine teachers, reduce opportunities for students to engage in creative and complex learning assignments, and deny high school diplomas because of students' failure to pass subjects they were never taught. They argue that using tests to raise academic standards makes as much sense as relying upon thermometers to reduce fevers. Most compellingly, they maintain that these tests are directing sanctions against the victims, rather than the perpetrators, of educational inequities.

The implications of these arguments were serious enough to lead The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University to commission a series of studies on the educational and social impact of high-stakes testing policies from some of the nation's top scholars in this field. Some of their most significant findings include:

§ High-stakes tests attached to grade promotion and high school graduation lead to increased dropout rates, particularly for minority students. George Madaus and Marguerite Clarke of Boston College discovered a strong association between high-stakes testing and increased dropout rates. They cite studies showing that in 1986 half of the ten states with the lowest dropout figures used no high-stakes tests. The other half employed testing programs that could be characterized as low stakes. Nine of the ten states with the highest dropout rates used standardized tests in decisions about high school graduation.

The effects for minority students can be discerned from a study by Aaron Pallas of Michigan State University and Gary Natriello of Columbia University, who examined the racial and ethnic disparities in performance on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) between 1996 and 1998. By the spring of their senior year, almost twice as many black and Hispanic students as white students had not passed the TAAS exit-level tests required to obtain a Texas high school diploma. The authors concluded that "these tests are, and will remain for some time, an impediment to the graduation prospects of African American and Hispanic youth." In another study, Columbia's Jay Heubert points out that students of color are almost always overrepresented among those who are denied diplomas on the basis of test scores.

§ Using tests to retain students in the same grade produces no lasting educational benefits. Robert Hauser of the University of Wisconsin has found that retaining students in the same grade creates huge management problems in the classroom, is extremely expensive for the school system and dramatically increases the likelihood that the retained student will eventually drop out.

Gary Orfield is a professor of education and social policy at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Kennedy School of Government, and co-director of the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University. He recently co-edited Religion, Race and Justice in a Changing America *(Century Foundation) and* Chilling Admissions: The Affirmative Action Crisis and the Search for Alternatives *(HEPG), and is currently co-editing a book on high-stakes testing. Johanna Wald is a researcher and writer/editor for the Civil Rights Project.*

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Moreover, African-American males are disproportionately represented among those who are held back. The Congressionally mandated 1999 National Academy of Sciences report *High Stakes: Testing for Tracking, Promotion and Graduation* cites five other studies that draw similar conclusions about the negative effects of retaining students.

§ High-stakes tests narrow the curriculum by encouraging a "teach to the test" approach in the classroom. Most curriculum experts recommend that students approach topics from a variety of perspectives, using all of their senses, over extended periods of time. Many high-stakes tests, however, rely upon multiple-choice questions, ask students to interpret isolated passages unrelated to larger themes or units, and require them to adhere to rigid writing formats that allow little room for deviation. Linda McNeil of Rice University and Angela Valenzuela of the University of Texas argue that while increasing numbers of students in poor schools in Houston may be passing the TAAS reading section, they "are not able to make meaning of literature...nor to connect reading assignments to other parts of the course such as discussion and writing." As Clifford Hill of Columbia University wrote recently in a *New York Times* Op-Ed, test preparation has come to "invade" the school day in poor schools in New York City, with worrisome effects: "Learning to take reading and writing tests is not the same as learning to read and write, especially when test prep materials do not meet basic standards."

Moreover, test preparation is far more likely to dominate teaching in high-poverty schools than in affluent ones. Such instruction has all but replaced the curriculum in Houston's poor schools, according to McNeil and Valenzuela's research. Also, high-poverty schools hire a large number of uncertified and inexperienced teachers who tend to focus exclusively on test preparation, as John Lee of the University of Maryland has found.

§ There is very little evidence linking test scores with economic productivity. According to Henry Levin of Columbia, the US economy is highly competitive despite the fact that our students lag behind other countries in test performance on some international comparisons. In fact, those countries that do score particularly well on tests may be suffering in the global economy because their curriculum is too narrow and does not yet offer the range of learning opportunities available to students in US schools.

Many states are using tests in ways that directly contradict the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences, the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights and other experts. The Office for Civil Rights' 1999 resource guide states that "a decision or characterization that will have major impact on a student should not be made on the basis of a single test score." Even one of the nation's most prominent advocates for the standards movement, Robert Schwartz, president of ACHIEVE, wrote recently, "Common sense suggests that states should not rely solely on the results of one-shot assessments." Educational testing service leaders also strongly warn against using test scores alone to make high-stakes judgments about students. Yet many school districts, according to Columbia's Heubert, use tests designed for other purposes to make tracking, promotion and graduation decisions.

If, as all these studies suggest, high-stakes tests both discriminate against poor and minority students and are educationally unsound, we are still left with the dilemma of how to achieve the

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dual goals of equity and excellence. Dozens of studies offer convincing evidence that children in poor schools make academic gains when they have access to quality early-childhood education programs, when they are taught in small classes by skilled and committed teachers, and when they are given assessments linked to appropriate and immediate responses.

The single most important factor in raising academic performance in poor schools appears to be the presence of experienced, competent and caring teachers. Disadvantaged youths currently are taught by the least prepared and most transient instructors in the system. Devising incentives for recruiting and maintaining highly qualified teachers and for retraining existing staff in high-poverty schools should be the top priority of those serious about raising standards.

Student assessments, of course, are essential to realizing improvements in students and schools. Several groups and individuals, including Clifford Hill, Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, the New York Performance Standards Consortium and the Coalition for Authentic Reform in Education (CARE) in Massachusetts have developed alternative modes of evaluating student performance. These share the following characteristics: (1) they are designed in collaboration with—rather than imposed upon—teachers; (2) they are varied enough to reflect the differing learning styles of students; (3) they address the curriculum actually taught in the classroom; and (4) they provide timely feedback linked to both student remediation, when necessary, and curriculum revisions. Standardized tests can play a role in such a restructured system. As recommended in *High Stakes*, test scores, combined with other assessments, can be very useful in identifying curricular weaknesses and in targeting students in need of additional support.

It is also possible to hold schools accountable for academic performance without penalizing students unfairly. One obvious way is to measure progress as well as outcome. By taking only standardized scores—which are heavily correlated with parents' income and level of education—into account, most current systems automatically reward schools in affluent areas. They also set up a destructive dynamic between teachers and struggling students. With their livelihood and reputations riding on scores alone, faculty are motivated to dismiss low performers in favor of those more likely to score well. One principal in Chicago even admitted that he expelled chronically truant students to boost his schools' test scores. A focus on improvement over outcome will alleviate that dynamic. Tennessee, for example, puts a central focus on the "Value Added" by a school's program.

Unfortunately, despite recent revelations of the high numbers of likely student "casualties" to high-stakes testing policies—especially among poor and minority children—many politicians have discovered that vows to bring about "world-class standards" and to "end social promotion" play well on the evening news. For the most part, the media continue to accept at face value claims that high-stakes tests represent a necessary form of tough love for struggling schools. Still, there are indications that the movement to suspend the high-stakes aspect of testing is gaining momentum. It has found an ally in Senator Paul Wellstone, who recently introduced legislation prohibiting the misuse of these tests. Delaware just decided, under intense protest, to postpone its new testing policies, and Virginia, Massachusetts and other states are currently experiencing fierce opposition to their testing requirements. Hopefully such public pressure will lead to the adoption of more effective and equitable uses of assessments within a restructured school reform movement. ■

LETTERS
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)

market needs to be kept in its place. That's not happening in The New U. Were I an undergraduate, I might well enroll in Aronowitz U, for I happen to like what's on offer. Still, the type of curriculum proffered in *The Knowledge Factory* is a throwback to the "core curriculums" that, at most places, were abandoned in the sixties as too constricting. Rather than give students latitude to make decisions for themselves, at AU the master planner is all-powerful. To me, that represents a sharp turn to the right.

DAVID L. KIRP

PERMATEMPS & PAYROLLERS

Seattle

■ Christopher D. Cook's March 27 article on contingent work, "Temps Demand a New Deal," while comprehensive, touched only briefly on a dynamic that has major implications for contingent workers. These workers are often lumped together as one group—"temps" who move from job to job. There are, indeed, many of these true temps, and they do need the legal protections that Cook clearly outlined. But there is also a large, usually hidden, group of "permanent" workers who are mislabeled by their employers as "temporary workers," "contract workers," etc. Many of the Rhode Island factory workers in Cook's article are actually long-term employees working year-in, year-out for the same employers. These workers are deliberately misclassified as temps to deny them equal pay and benefits. This practice is called "payrolling," because the only connection between the workers and the agencies pretending to be their employers is the payroll check. Payrolling of "permatemp" workers is a huge business. More than 1,500 companies offer this service over the Internet. One company, Comforce, promises employers to "cut labor costs by as much as 50 percent."

These phony employment schemes will have a huge impact on public retirement and healthcare systems as workers age. A typical temp agency 401(k) contribution is $150 per year—a far cry from the average 6 percent employer contribution. Only 7 percent of temporary staff have employer-sponsored health plans. Older workers with chronic health conditions will end up on Medicaid, and that's just a small piece of the potential burden on public systems.

If we acknowledge that these so-called temporary workers are deliberately mislabeled, we can challenge these practices through organizing, legislating and litigating. (After a lawsuit was filed against ARCO, former "contractors" were suddenly converted to bargaining unit employees at an ARCO California plant.)

This is a great opportunity for labor to be creative with new strategies to convert disfranchised temporary workers into regular employees with real benefits.

DAVID WEST
The Center for a Changing Workforce

AHEM, IT'S -FIGHTER, NOT -SLINGER

Elkins, W.Va.

■ In his review of Sam Shepard's *True West*, "Decline of the West" [April 24], David Yaffe says that Bob Dylan and Shepard's song "Brownsville Girl" is about a John Ford picture called *The Gunslinger*. It isn't. It's about Henry King's *The Gunfighter*. Yaffe's book about jazz and American literature sounds fascinating, *if* he's more careful.

JOE GOLDBERG

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Sartre's Roads to Freedom

DANIEL SINGER

Paris

Asked where he was coming from, my friend's son replied, "From the demo against the death of Sartre." It was April 19, 1980, and the definition fitted perfectly, for Sartre's funeral, attended by some 50,000, could be described as the last demo of the New Left. It was posthumous in another sense. The engagement associated with Sartre—the intellectual's or writer's social and political commitment—had been cast aside five years earlier by the self-appointed "new philosophers"—crude in thought but skilled in propaganda—who loudly proclaimed that any attempt to alter society radically was bound to end with the gulag. Indeed, the cliché fashionable well into the eighties was that Sartre's fellow at the highly competitive École Normale, Raymond Aron—an intelligent pillar of the Western establishment, a sort of superior Daniel Bell—had always been right, whereas *son petit camarade* Jean-Paul had always been wrong. But such was the pressure of propaganda that the other side merely snapped back that it was better to be wrong with Sartre than to be right with Aron.

Has the mood changed twenty years on? Six books devoted to Sartre have just been published here for the anniversary. Newspapers have been full of portraits, weeklies and monthlies replete with extracts, comments and assessments. Are these not signs, as many titles suggested, of a comeback, a resurrection? On the international scale, judging by the conferences held and books printed, Sartre has never quite been forgotten. Yet even in the narrow Parisian and political sense, one can talk only of a partial revival. Sartre is feted not because of his engagement but in spite of it. Of the books mentioned, only the smallest, that of Benoit Denis, which is devoted to literary commitment from Pascal to Sartre, does justice to the latter's contribution to the struggles of the intellectuals. Philippe Petit, who seems sympathetic to *la cause de Sartre*, writes essentially about that extraordinary monument of literary criticism, *The Family Idiot*, Sartre's 2,988-page unfinished analytical portrait of Flaubert. And Olivier Wickers elegantly muses on various aspects of this literary figure. But three others start from the premise that Aron was always right. Indeed, since they describe Sartre as Stalin's stooge and a servant of totalitarianism, we shall have to return to the heart of the matter. But first, why so much talk about the man at all?

Younger people cannot remember the impact, the extraordinary charisma, of this far from handsome little man with a lazy eye. I am not referring here to the postwar craze, when tourists invaded the caves and cafes of Saint-Germain-des-Prés in search of existentialists and innumerable youngsters took as their model the "free couple" of Jean-Paul and Simone (known as *le castor*, French for beaver, of which her name de Beauvoir was apparently a reminder). No, I am talking about the crucial part performed by Sartre for at least three decades after the war in the cultural and political battles on the international stage, about his role as the chief critic of the Western world (in retrospect, and considering the importance of *The Second Sex*, one should probably talk of the influence of the couple).

On the twentieth anniversary of his death, new books, excerpts and commentary fill the air—but with resurrection or prosecution?

Prolific and many-sided are ridiculous euphemisms when applied to Sartre. We know from *The Words* that he acquired in childhood the habit of writing for six to seven hours a day, and much more (with the help of all sorts of drugs) when the issue fascinated him or the timetable required it. He wrote some philosophy with literary elegance and put philosophical ideas into his novels. But he was also a playwright, a major literary critic, a screenwriter and

Daniel Singer is The Nation*'s Europe correspondent.*

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a cultural and political essayist, not to mention the innumerable petitions he wrote or signed whenever he thought injustice was involved. He turned down all the honors bestowed by the establishment, including the Nobel Prize for Literature. Herbert Marcuse once called him "the conscience of the world."

Fame and political involvement came rather late. Sartre was almost 40 when World War II ended. A teacher by training, he had already published an important novel (*Nausea*), a collection of short stories (*The Wall*); had had two plays staged (*The Flies* and *No Exit*) and had finished his major philosophical work (*Being and Nothingness*). Though he was vaguely leftish, he was not very involved in politics. More serious was his hatred for his own milieu, the bourgeoisie, which cannot be explained in purely psychoanalytic terms (his father died when he was 1, and his happy life with his widowed mother was interrupted eleven years later by his bourgeois manager stepfather). Sartre's Resistance record, while not heroic, was honorable. Yet it was only after the war that he began to preach the imperative of political commitment.

Most commentators attribute the change to his brief stay in a German camp for French prisoners of war. Sartre the individualist found himself for the first time in a popular collectivity and enjoyed it. This certainly helped, but the reasons were much deeper: It was the war, the Resistance and the situation after the conflict. Like Mathieu, one of the heroes of his *Roads to Freedom*, Sartre the libertarian individualist had finally to answer the question: freedom for what purpose? The subject of literature, he now said, has always been man in the world. The writer "must show the reader his power to make, or to unmake, in short to act—for man is to be reinvented every day." He even suggested that the task of the writer was "to struggle in favor of the freedom of the person and of socialist revolution."

This activist message accounts for Sartre's tremendous popularity as well as for the hatred he aroused as "the corrupter of youth" (right-wingers actually paraded with the slogan "Shoot Sartre"). This attitude corresponded to the mood of the times. France was torn, radicalized by war and occupation. The movement of colonial liberation was spreading. And the world was soon to be split in two by the cold war. It is interesting to note that at war's end, though he was unquestionably a leftist, Sartre took several years to choose his side. While now interested in Marxism and the class struggle, Sartre was very often the target of attacks by Communists, both French and foreign. He was among the writers about whom the Soviet hack A. Fadeyev said, at an intellectual congress in 1948, that "if hyenas could use fountain pens and jackals could use typewriters" they would be writing like them. But it was give and take. Sartre wrote that "the politics of Stalinist Communism are incompatible with the honest exercise of the literary profession." He argued that Stalinism had rendered Marxism sterile, because you cannot turn "dialectics into formulae for catechism." His monthly magazine, *Les Temps modernes*, did admit that "there is no socialism when one citizen out of twenty is in a camp." Indeed, for a time Sartre and other leftists tried to create their own movement, for a socialist Europe separate from the Soviet Union as well as the United States. It was only in 1951–52 that he chose sides.

The last days of Stalin's reign, with ghastly trials in Eastern Europe, may not have been the best period for conversion, but with the Korean War, the witch hunts and the hardening of lines on both sides, this was a time when choice was thrust upon people. Sartre reacted to the demonstration against NATO commander Gen. Matthew Ridgway, smashed in Paris by the police, with his famous "an anti-Communist is a dog." His basic premise at the time was that the Communist Party was the only revolutionary representative of the French working class and that the Soviet Union was a socialist state in need of repair (*en panne*). He then wrote a pamphlet in honor of a French Communist sailor resisting the French invasion of Indochina; he spoke at the peace congress in Vienna in 1952; he also traveled to Russia and wrote things that he should not have: for instance, that "freedom of criticism there was complete." Yet even then, collaboration between Sartre and the Communists was mutually suspicious, and it broke off in 1956, when Soviet tanks entered Budapest. Sartre then proclaimed that he would sever links with Soviet writers who did not condemn this massacre; "as to the men who at this time direct the French

HEARTLAND

And she saying, I cannot quite
hear what she says, but he, standing
in clothes washed too often still
to be warm, looks out at the land.

And she saying, I cannot hear
what follows his name, and he, "What's
it all meant, Lizzie? We've made
a living and no one doubts our name."

And he remembering the years
before the green combines and long,
open barns for machinery
and their hands on each other young.

And she saying, I cannot tell
whether or not it's comforting,
until he turns to a door that
is not a new house and goes in.

And she saying, I can hear now,
"If the words are old, let them be.
It's hard enough with a dream;
here, what can you see of a plan?"

And he nodding, I can no longer
hear what she says, the house shadowed
by combines and long open barns,
the fields planted and bare for rain.

Trent Busch

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CP, it is not, and it would never be, possible to resume relations."

Never say never. Circumstances altered. There was some hope of a thaw in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and the putsch that brought de Gaulle to power in 1958. Add the anticolonial struggle (Sartre discovered Castro's Cuba and wrote the violent preface to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*), especially the war in Algeria, during which, incidentally, Sartre's Paris flat was blown up by rightist OAS thugs. And so he reappeared on common platforms with Communists and resumed his fairly frequent journeys to the Soviet Union (we now know that these also had a sentimental reason: his beautiful translator and guide, Lena Zonina). But the collaboration was always strained, since Sartre was no man to march to a party line. For instance, he signed and published in his journal the famous "Manifesto of the 121," approving the desertion of French soldiers in the Algerian war, whereas the CP was against it. But the final break came in 1968: In May the student demonstrations and the strikes ultimately convinced Sartre that the French CP was not a revolutionary force. In August the tanks entering Prague persuaded him that the Soviet Union and its bloc needed much, much more than repairs. He ceased to believe in its progressive function.

Sartre was thrilled by the radical spirit of French students and young workers, and this prompted his Maoist phase. He didn't quite share all the mad ideas of his protégés; ideologically, he was closer to the Il Manifesto group, the left-wing dissidents from the Italian CP. But he duly protected his French favorites, taking up the title of editor of a paper whenever his predecessor was indicted or imprisoned (and de Gaulle had the wit to tell his subordinates that "one does not jail Voltaire") or selling the Maoist weekly *La Cause du Peuple* in the street. But when his comrades advised him to write populist novels, he stuck to his "bourgeois" task—the unfinished Flaubert. Then in 1975 came the terrible tragedy—full blindness. Sartre could still sign petitions and give interviews, but real creation was over.

IN THIS ESSAY

SARTRE.
By Denis Bertholet. Plon. 594 pp.

L'ADIEU À SARTRE.
By Michel-Antoine Burnier.
Plon. 332 pp.

LITTÉRATURE ET ENGAGEMENT.
By Benoit Denis. Seuil. 316 pp.

LE SIÈCLE DE SARTRE.
By Bernard-Henri Lévy.
Grasset. 663 pp.

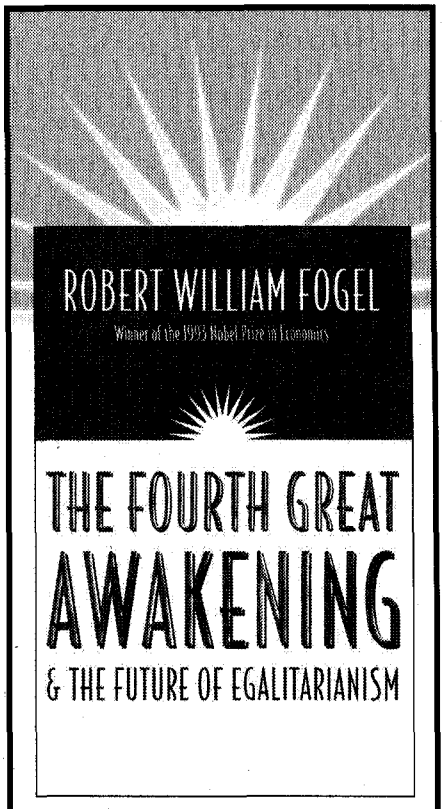
LA CAUSE DE SARTRE.
By Philippe Petit. Presses Universitaires de France (PUF). 251 pp.

TROIS AVENTURES EXTRAORDINAIRES DE JEAN-PAUL SARTRE.
By Olivier Wickers. Gallimard. 239 pp.

After this thumbnail sketch, we can face the three political prosecutors. The first two can be dismissed quickly. Denis Bertholet is the author of a biography full of facts; since his purpose is not pamphleteering, one wonders why he picked Sartre as a subject, so obvious is his allergy to his hero's political philosophy (when he gets interested in Marxism, "he gets down on his knees"; and the mood of the Russell tribunal, presided over by Sartre, which investigated US war crimes in Vietnam, is described as quasi-fascist in its treatment of the "American scapegoat"). Michel-Antoine Burnier is a former groupie (to walk with Sartre to the newsstand, he recalls, was like going up the Champs-Elysées with Brigitte Bardot) who, now repentant, insists on Sartre's one-sidedness and repeats the hackneyed catalogue of things Sartre should have said and didn't, or vice versa.

It is best to tackle Bernard-Henri Lévy, known for publicity's sake as "BHL." As one of the inventors of the "new philosophy," he was the enemy of engagement, but now he describes this century as belonging to Sartre. He is visibly fond of the man and, inevitably, impressed by the extraordinary fame achieved before the full reign of television.

This time BHL has done his homework. He shows us how Sartre picked from Kierkegaard, Husserl or Heidegger whatever he found useful for his own phenomenology. BHL actually portrays two Sartres. One is the good man—the author of *Nausea* and *Being and Nothingness*—who cares about freedom and does not give a damn about the world. The second, the villain, wants to improve mankind and, in so doing, becomes the servant of the totalitarians. Naturally, the story has shades and even a happy ending. You may remember that the blind Sartre had as his reader and companion Pierre Victor, *a k a* Benny Levy. This former Maoist leader was in the process of conversion from the Little Red Book to the Talmud. They even produced a joint text just before Sartre's death. BHL sees in it the makings of a Jewish Sartre, following in the footsteps of Emmanuel Lévinas.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There is another Parisian paradox in the book. Whatever his politics now, BHL still claims as his great master Louis Althusser, the best-known French Communist philosopher. He even argues that Sartre went wrong when he abandoned the Althusserian "anti-humanism." Be that as it may, Althusser was a party cardholder throughout his political life, whereas Sartre was never a member of the CP and, as seen, could not even be described as a real fellow-traveler. Why, then, is the master spared, while Sartre is described as "a fanatic," "a preacher of voluntary servitude," suffering from "totalitarian delirium"? The trouble is, all these indictments are written outside historical context. *Vae victis*: This is the story as written by the victors. What happened had to happen. One does not even contemplate, for instance, whether—with a different policy from above and pressure from below—the course of events might have been different in the Soviet area.

And the victors are also morally right. When the knights of cultural freedom meet in Berlin at the time of the Korean War, they are splendid, and it in no way disturbs our authors that they were financed by the CIA. They cannot even understand why Sartre was always worried that his action might help the "other side." There is no other side. When BHL proclaims that Marxism is dead and the evil spirit of revolution buried forever, he does not mean that Stalinist theology is in the historical dustbin where it properly belongs or that the radical transformation of society will now have to take a different form from the storming of the Winter Palace. He means that we must be content with small changes and that the reign of capital is eternal. Our new literary dandies do shed tears for victims in one place or another. Unkind critics suggest that they do so only if TV cameras are nearby and if it does not disturb the establishment. But even if we assume that they are genuinely grieved by the millions of children who die through sickness or starvation, it will never cross their minds to question the system that produces such results. No wonder they cannot understand Sartre's struggle and his hatred for his own class.

One quality BHL cannot be denied is his sense of the coming fashion. He claims that he started this book five years ago, that is to say, immediately after the strikes and demonstrations that shook France in 1995. By then, the "new philosophy" was old hat, and clearly something more than the gulag was needed to persuade the French people to resign themselves to their fate. But he wrote it before Seattle, which suggests that sooner or later there may be an international search for an alternative society. Only when this happens shall we see books doing justice to Sartre. I don't mean hagiographies—there will be full portraits, with warts and all. Thus, from documents published we now know that the famous couple was not quite as ideal as it was painted. There will be questions about the identification of socialism with the Soviet Union and about Sartre's coolness toward left-wing critics of Stalinism. One will have to re-examine the many quarrels, including the most famous break, with Albert Camus in 1952. Retrospectively, there is no doubt that Camus had more sensitivity, more sympathy for the victims of Soviet repression; yet when it came closer to home, during the Algerian war, it was not Sartre "the politician" but the moralist Camus who claimed—when getting his Nobel in Stockholm—"I believe in justice, but I will put my mother before justice."

Above all, there will be the inner contradictions between Sartre's original philosophy and its further development, illustrated by the fact that he never published *Morale*, which was to follow *Being and Nothingness*, or the promised second volume of his *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. But out of all these contradictions will emerge the picture of a small man of tremendous vitality, extraordinary generosity and real grandeur. It will also show the tragic dilemma, in the second half of the twentieth century, of a leftist who wanted to change things at home, where the bulk of the working class voted Communist, and in the world, where for all its ambiguity the Soviet Union was the only brake on US imperialism. To be active while saying a plague on both their houses was not easy at the time.

Yet this, however interesting, is history. The Soviet Union, with its subordinate Communist parties, is gone. But we still have plenty to learn from Sartre the freedom fighter, Sartre the activist, who told writers that "to keep quiet is not to be mute; it is to refuse to speak and hence to speak in a way." In the years after the "demo against his death," intellectuals abandoned politics, particularly progressive politics, and not only in France. Now there are some hopeful signs of a move in the opposite direction. Sartre the champion of commitment still has plenty to teach us as we resume our advance along the Roads (plural on purpose) to Freedom, *Les Chemins de la liberté*. ■

No Exit? Dream On.

ANDY MERRIFIELD

SOCIALIST REGISTER 2000: Necessary and Unnecessary Utopias. Edited by Leo Panitch and Colin Leys. Monthly Review. 293 pp. Paper $23.

SPACES OF HOPE. By David Harvey. California. 297 pp. Paper $24.95.

One of the twentieth century's most interesting Marxists, Ernst Bloch, was also one of its weirdest. He wrote, after all, about something decidedly un-Marxist: utopia. In the early 1940s, as Nazi flames engulfed continental Europe, he undertook a mammoth three-volume study of the utopian spirit, exploring in Harvard's Widener Library its history and possible reality. Years later, just before his death in 1977, Bloch admitted in an interview that utopia has "had a bad press." Bloch had no idea how far that bad press would stretch in the decade to follow. As the Communist experiments imploded, and as those high gray walls and mighty statues came crashing down, the left's utopian dreams looked a lot like the "melancholy of fulfillment" Bloch feared so much. A decade on again, this left-wing melancholy has proved no match for free-market triumphalism, whose agents and apologists happily assure us of our eternal present: Utopia is here, the end of history is nigh, there's simply no alternative, you can't derive an *ought* from an *is*.

Not so long ago, of course, the left was busy being realistic: It demanded the impossible, usually out on the streets. Nowadays, with spin doctors, pinstripes and think-tank hacks at the helm, progressives everywhere are forced to be impossible: They must somehow demand the realistic, negotiate in the boardroom. Sober pragmatism, deceit and organization men have vanquished passionate principle, in-your-face truth and rebels. One of the saddest things that are gone, too—at least for the left—is

Andy Merrifield, co-author most recently of The Urbanization of Injustice *(NYU), writes frequently about urbanism and politics.*

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something these two books seek to reclaim. It's perhaps our most creative, indefatigable, yet problematic impulse. Bloch thrived on it: hope. Hope isn't confidence, nor is it naïve optimism; it's the opposite of security, and it can be disappointed. And yet, "hope," says Bloch, "still nails a flag on the mast, even in decline, in that the decline is not accepted." Pitfalls and danger forever ambush hope, but "it is the consciousness of danger and at the same time the determined negation of that which continually makes the opposite of the hoped-for-object possible."

The *Socialist Register* has been hoping along these lines ever since 1964. Each successive collection, produced on a shoestring by the late Martin Eve's Merlin Press in England, in conjunction with Monthly Review Press here (E.P. Thompson, Georg Lukacs and Ernest Mandel also figure on its list), has tried to nourish international socialist thought and solidarity. Traditionally, the *Register* brings together luminary intellectuals, academics, activists and trade unionists from all over Europe and North America. This, the thirty-sixth offering, is no different in its yearning to grapple critically with the politics of the *Zeitgeist* and "to renew the left's vision and spirit." Only now, editors Leo Panitch and Colin Leys insist, "sustained political struggle is impossible without the hope of a better society that we can, in principle and in outline, imagine."

The collective imagination presented here is of a future where the orthodoxy of globalization is no more, Third Way quackery has exceeded its sell-by date and the grip of party-line Marxism has loosened. The capitalist patriarchal racket, in short, would be beat. Such is the *Register*'s hope against hope. Needless to say, the logic behind all this isn't that these lofty ideals are realistically attainable—we can never know that in advance. It's more that in reaching for the stars the left might at least be able to stand upright. Panitch and Sam Gindin set the tone of the debate with a thoughtful sketch on how to "transcend the pessimism." On their agenda is nothing short of a "concrete utopia." In effect, this signals a rehabilitation of Bloch's rehabilitation of Marxism, offering not a blueprint but a hazy recognition of the concrete potentialities and capacities immanent in what we already have. A bit like Marx, this vision distances itself from pure speculation, grounding its critique, hope and activism in present tendencies and real historical possibilities. Nevertheless, it gropes farther into the twilight zone than Marx ever did, unabashedly dreaming

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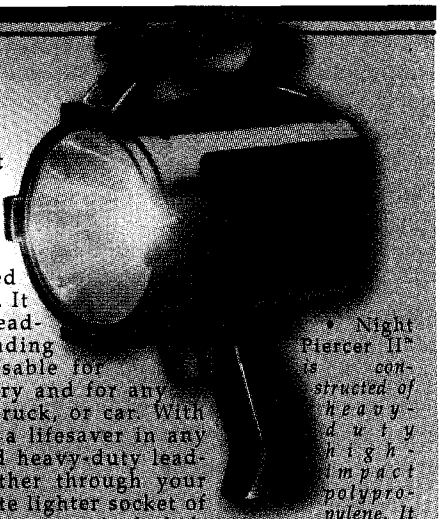

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about the imaginary yet-to-become, a realm not separable from life but one that unleashes and develops what is latent, one-sided and alienated in life. Getting real now means abandoning the "abstract utopias" of overcautious pragmatism, a world, Panitch and Gindin say, after Bloch, "too small to deliver on the large promises it holds out and a telling neglect of the politics of getting there." Now, an analysis of the accumulation of capital as well as "the accumulation of capacities" is vital; and such "capacity-building" must include several dimensions, many of which are fleshed out in the chapters that follow.

To begin with, any concrete utopia would plainly overcome alienation and attenuate the division of labor, making work meaningful and abbreviated, with added leisure time not just for a select few. This, too, would presage the shift away from highly consumerist lifestyles to discover, as Kate Soper notes, "other pleasures," to revel in the joys of what Rimbaud called "making yourself useless." Experiments in living would equally flourish, within the household and between men and women, betokening a "new gender contract" (Frigga Haug) and "utopian families" (Johanna Brenner), healthy antidotes to the privatized, heterosexual nuclear norm we love and hate, or else love to hate, today. We should fight to defend public schools, Brenner says, against voucher systems, to insure that federal dollars get spent on human services rather than armaments; and battle for single mothers driven into low-wage jobs. "In these and many other arenas," she says, "we can pose alternatives to the overburdened, isolated family household through an attractive vision of co-operative, democratic, ways of caring for adults and children."

Mechanisms for allocating money in favor of a robust public sector conjure up awkward questions about agency: How do we do it? Who will do the doing? Who is this "we" anyway?—and how markets can work for people, become somehow "socialized." Diane Elson tackles this latter issue head-on, revisiting and revising her efforts of the previous decade in *New Left Review*. She's adamant that socializing the market isn't the same as market socialism; it doesn't simply suggest state regulation of markets but "going beyond that to embed market transactions in egalitarian social relations." To emphasize exactly what's meant, Elson describes the market for the *Socialist Register*, which, like other left publications—and like this very magazine—functions quite differently from anything produced under profit-maximizing circumstances. The venture doesn't pander to shareholder greed, and subscriptions and donations frequently keep the labor of love afloat. Many staff offer their time gratis or for token pay. All told, readers, writers, editors, publishers and distributors constitute an "associative sector"—businesslike, to be sure, but the market flows with a co-operative spirit and operates through the "dynamics of solidarity."

How can we, Harvey asks, talk about social change and not simultaneously be prepared, physically and mentally, to change ourselves?

Many other egalitarian associations socialize markets and represent ideal microcosms of a future macrocosm: international "fair trade" networks, innovative barter exchanges and market interactions, in both local and transnational settings, that don't use money as a universal measure of value or as an "automatic fetish." These, Elson hopes, can be nurtured and enlarged alongside broader movements that demand greater corporate and financial accountability and try to realize human as well as common property rights. Ricardo Blaug offers a few clues about how we might get that far, highlighting the role of agency and struggle in filling the gaps in the journey, vividly pushing back the frontiers of the meanwhile. He's interested in "outbreaks of democracy," of which there are plenty scattered around the world right now, almost everywhere, from the Zapatistas and the Nike boycotts to sustainable agriculture and antibiotech militants. For him, democracy is a mode of being rather than a form of government, and it mushrooms in unpredictable and unexpected political spaces, being opportunistic, fluid and contagious, and involving mass mobilizations of citizens. And, as Rousseau said, "once you have citizens, you've all you need." These outbreaks may be ephemeral, says Blaug, but "that does not mean they always will be, nor that they thereby lack importance."

Tucked away at the back of the *Socialist Register 2000* is an index of collections from the past decade. Many who write this time are the same people who wrote ten years earlier. And I know a good few here were at it ten years before that! Their dedication is highly commendable. On the other hand, therein lies part of the problem. For if the utopian spirit is ever going to be bequeathed and revitalized, these aging stalwarts must loosen their grip on the mantle. The latest edition sounds a little too predictable, cozy and cliquey for its own good. It needs younger blood, a fresh spark, fewer smooth old prizes and more rough new ones, something more cafeteria than common room. Disappointingly, too, the *Register* misses a lot of what's going on now, especially in the United States, whose radical political landscape is understated worst of all. While the text was already in press during Seattle's WTO rumbles, there's also no mention of the antisweatshop campaigns gaining strength across US campuses, the AFL-CIO's Union Summers or the living-wage activism rampant in many cities. True, these aren't yet concrete utopias. But rest assured, there will be budding utopians among their ranks who'll keep hope alive.

Some of these insurgencies feature in David Harvey's *Spaces of Hope*, the more satisfying and compelling of these two books. That's not just because it has more breadth but also because there's more depth, given that the drama is rooted somewhere, mindful of Raymond Williams's contention (in *Resources of Hope*) that socialism must necessarily involve a "politics of place." Of course, it must develop a "politics of space" as well, a politics whereby people and places bond with other people and places, coalesce on a larger scale, wrestle with mobile corporations and global financial flows on a level playing field. The problem of geography, says Harvey, is a political problem of the left. What emerges, accordingly, is a dialogue that to's and fro's between the highly personal and the abstractly political, between the individual and the global economy, mediated all the while by Marx's materialist theory—something, Harvey reckons, now more relevant to our daily lives than ever before.

Harvey beds down his spaces of hope in Baltimore, a city of mixed fortunes, where he's lived and taught on and off for twenty-five years. On the one hand, Harvey's wish-Baltimore comes straight out of Barry Levinson's *Avalon* or *Liberty Heights*: a city full of citizenly love and people yearning for a solid community, who are prepared to join hands across the flames and rebuild the ruins after the fire stops. On the other hand, Harvey has no illusions about the sad truth, the gritty realism, of abandoned hopes, a junkyard of dreams looking a lot more like Levinson's *Homicide*, with its life (and death) on the

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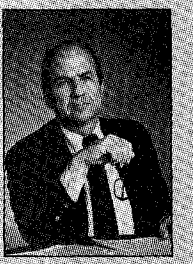

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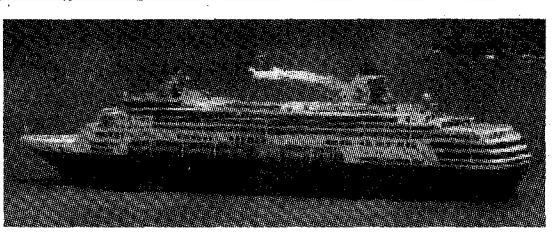

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mean streets, dancing to a perverse dialectical beat: Baltimore has some of the nation's finest schools, but they're all private and so are denied to most children. The city has growing homelessness, yet also 40,000 boarded-up houses. It has one of the world's best medical centers and public health schools, yet "life-expectancy is abysmally low and the health statistics in the immediate environs of these institutions tell an appalling story of impoverishment, marginalization, exploitation, and neglect." Baltimore has a glitzy waterfront and a swanky new sports stadium that guzzled gallons of public money, but soup-kitchen lines lengthen and inner-city missions are stretched beyond coping.

Little wonder that in the mid-nineties, Baltimore was the first US city to enact living-wage legislation. Many citizens had plainly had enough. The rot of the working poor had to stop. Spearheaded by BUILD (Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development), a faith-based, Alinsky-style community alliance, and a group called the Solidarity Sponsoring Committee, with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees chipping in, a local minimum wage was secured for janitors, restaurant workers, security guards, parking-lot attendants and others toiling for employers who have a city service contract; current negotiations seek expansion into empowerment zones. "The 'living wage' issue," says Harvey, "is fundamentally a class issue that has ramifications across the moments of production, exchange, and consumption." It changes "baseline conditions" of what Marx deemed "variable capital"—the cost of one's labor power, one's bodily capacity to labor. Low pay, for Harvey, is an infringement of a worker's moral and ethical right, since poverty and overwork threaten extended reproduction, destroy vital powers and health, detrimentally affect a worker's body and well-being. In short, low pay undermines the whole physical and experiential world of the working class and thus violates basic human rights. Harvey burrows into the "Working Day" chapter from *Capital* to show how Marx insisted that a person should have full rights over his or her body. While Marx was deeply suspicious of "universal" rights, "what on earth," asks Harvey, "are workers of the world supposed to unite about unless it is some sense of their fundamental rights as human beings?"

There are heavy implications here for the working class, whose bodies get used and abused—"marked" female bodies especially—for profit and as part of capital-accumulation strategies. Common ties between hamburger flippers in East Baltimore and solemakers in Vietnam's Dong Nai province are becoming ever more palpable, and "connecting the sentiments of the Manifesto with those expressed in The Declaration of Human Rights provides one way to link discourses about globalization with those of the body." To reap full political advantage, we need to look nearer home and invent a few visionary ideals for ourselves within these interstices of hope, where much contested terrain and potentiality reside. Didn't the young Marx recognize that drives, yearnings and sensual desires are characteristic of our "species being"? Didn't he know, too, in older age, how these vital powers enable us to erect structures in our imagination prior to building them in reality? Must we, Harvey queries, citing Roberto Unger, "be helpless puppets of the institutional and imaginative worlds we inhabit"? Hell no. And yet, at the same time, we must be leery of "degenerate utopias": those that make "spatial form" a priority, arrest dynamic time, dam change and build walls around themselves, thereby insuring stasis. More's Utopia, Plato's Republic, the former Eastern bloc and bourgeois gated privatopias all spring to mind.

Harvey's clunky language—"discourse," "situatedness," "embeddedness," "positionality," "deterritorialization," etc.—sometimes inhibits the clarity of his ideas, which, whether you agree with them or not, are generally brilliant. His "spatiotemporal utopianism" is a bit of a mouthful, yet it is thought-provoking and shimmers with hope. How can any of us, Harvey asks, talk about social change without simultaneously being prepared, physically and mentally, to change ourselves? But how can we change ourselves without changing the world too? Harvey suggests we "re-make and re-imagine" ourselves and our notion of community: "The rule-making that ever constitutes community must be set against the rule-breaking that makes for revolutionary transformations." Radical "communities of action" cannot be anything but "militant particularist," having their origins somewhere and at some time, organizing around a particular struggle. However, Harvey says dialectics can teach progressives how this particular always exists in relation to the universal—and vice versa. Shifting gears from particularity (place-specific) to universality (everywhere) entails "translation," generalizing local struggles (like poverty and bad housing) while particularizing general struggles (like exploita-

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tion and the environment), building alliances around a common fate and foe, acting and thinking on a double front, on both local and global scales, building participatory institutions.

At the end of *Spaces of Hope*, Harvey propels us into the year 2020 and lets us share his conscious dream: A stock-market collapse drove pension funds and banks under, and aging baby boomers lost financial security. Global warming led to widespread crop failure and environmental havoc. After a period of anarchy, military law was imposed. Then, suddenly, in 2019, fragmented clandestine revolutionary organizations, increasingly frustrated and dissatisfied, came together and overthrew the ruling powers. A year later, the world was organized around egalitarian networks of global exchange in bioregions of about 3 million people each. Wage labor was abolished, replaced by "labor credits." Technology really did lighten the load now, liberating time. Transportation was made easily available to everyone, in electric cars and trains, slower and more restricted, but, like sex, free and safe. A transformed spirit pervaded the new social order, and play, aesthetics and pursuit of intellectual and individual passions began to flourish. Best of all, there were "no banks and insurance companies to run our lives, no lawyers, stockbrokers, no vast bureaucracies, no professors of this or that." Corporate universities shut their doors, and pleasure and avocation returned to learning. The *Socialist Register* ceased printing, too; there was simply no audience anymore. Former socialists stopped getting angry and took up sailing instead. Nobody needed to write books about "hope" either. Utopian? Sure. But only one question remains: Whatever happened to George W.? ■

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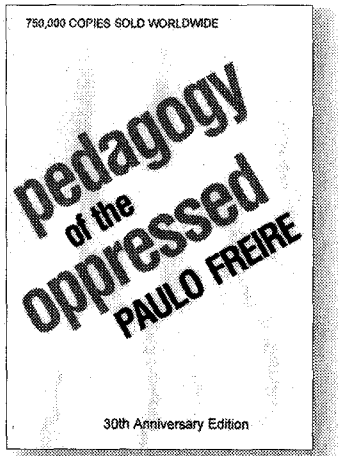

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acting in a probability field, the three characters of this pristine chamber piece—Heisenberg, Bohr and his wife, Margrethe—re-enact the event over and over. In fact, they tell us, they've come back from the dead expressly for this purpose. "Another draft!" they cry, as they careen from version to version. But it is clear that memory does not serve, not even on the most basic details of the meeting. Was it September or October? ("No fallen leaves!" says Bohr.) Did they ever even leave the house? ("No further than my study!") Where had they walked (if indeed they had)? ("There never was any mystery," exclaims Heisenberg. "I remember it absolutely clearly, because my life was at stake.") Memory is, in short, as uncertain as the principle bearing Heisenberg's name.

Like a law of physics, one question sets off a chain reaction of penetrating questions, driving the play into the heart of the matter—moral responsibility and conflicting loyalties to friend, country and humanity. Why had Heisenberg risked his life (and Bohr's) and come to Copenhagen in the first place? To warn his cherished colleague and Danish Jewish friend that the Germans were close to building a bomb? To obtain information from Bohr as to how advanced the Allies were in their efforts? To show off to his mentor how far his own research had progressed? To seek moral absolution from his father figure for working on the practical exploitation of atomic energy? Or for an even darker purpose: to seek Bohr's assistance with mathematical calculations, so he could in turn complete his work on the bomb for the Nazis? Over and over, the characters unfold the event according to each hypothesis, like recalculations of a scientific experiment.

But no matter. The rest is history, as the characters tell us, they who are now dead, they who look back on the event together with us, the living. Or is it? (And what is history, anyway, if nothing is certain? the play implies.) Heisenberg never succeeded in making the bomb, after all—he miscalculated, causing the Nazis to fall behind irrevocably in the nuclear race. His life was ruined, his friendships fractured, his career dishonored. Were his miscalculations intentional? Was our world ultimately preserved by "that final core of uncertainty at the heart of things"?

How then, asks Frayn, should history judge people: by their motives or by the consequences of their actions? And given the uncertainty principle, how can history judge at all? For, as the play reveals with exquisite irony, Heisenberg never built a bomb, never killed a soul. Whereas Bohr became a father figure to the German Jewish nuclear physicists at Los Alamos. Heisenberg, the German whose mathematical error ("such a tiny failure") saved European cities, even Copenhagen, from destruction.... Bohr, the Dane who helped design the trigger for the bomb on Nagasaki ("my small but helpful part in the deaths of a hundred thousand people").

"What will be left of our beloved world? Our ruined and dishonored and beloved world?" Margrethe asks, the final question in the chain reaction. It's the question Frayn asks, ultimately, of us, too, we who sit in the audience, facing one another, arena-like, surrounding the play, listening to the greatest moral questions of our time articulated by three fine actors (Philip Bosco as Bohr, Blair Brown as Margrethe, Michael Cumpsty as Heisenberg). Some of us are seated in the section that the inspired director, Michael Blakemore, and designer, Peter Davidson, have placed right on the stage, high above the actors, like jurists at the trial of the twentieth century. We look out over their heads into the cavernous orchestra and balcony of the Royale. A sea of faces...all that humanity, saved. A thrilling and terrifying metaphor for the twentieth century and its cataclysmic events. A towering achievement for the theater.

Frayn is not the only playwright currently turning to science as a source of inspiration. In fact, science is becoming the hottest topic in theater today, so much so that it's identifiable as a millennial phenomenon on the English-speaking stage. Just look at the current theater season, with *Copenhagen* at the vortex: In London, the remarkable Théâtre de Complicité has just staged a thrilling new play called *Mnemonic*—also about memory, connection and human evolution. A naked actor representing the remains of a 5,000-year-old iceman, lying on an examination table surrounded by scientists, is one of the most stunning theatrical visions of the millennial season. In New York, at the Manhattan Theatre Club, we've lately seen Shelagh Stevenson's *An Experiment With an Air Pump* (about the ethics of medical experimentation), Arthur Kopit's *Y2K* (about computer technology) and David Auburn's *Proof* (about mathematics). A monthlong festival of works inspired by science played at the Ensemble Studio Theatre in April as well.

Playwrights have been using scientific subject matter as a unifying dramatic meta-

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phor particularly since the mid-nineties—Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*, Peter Brook's *The Man Who...*, Brian Friel's *Molly Sweeney*, Spalding Gray's *Gray's Anatomy* and Margaret Edson's *Wit* come to mind. Perhaps the most encompassing is Tom Stoppard's visionary *Arcadia*, in whose footsteps *Copenhagen* followed, from the Royal National Theatre to London's West End to Broadway. And just as Frayn and his director use the stage as a scientific metaphor and practice dramaturgy as scientific method, Stoppard actually shows us how time works in theatrical terms, with the relish of a researcher conducting an experiment. "It's wanting to know that makes us matter," says a character in *Arcadia*. "Otherwise we're going out the way we came in." Like wanting to know what happened in *Copenhagen*...

Last fall, the Royal National Theatre held a conference of leading British scientists and playwrights, who gathered to address scientific issues of urgent and mutual interest, such as technological advancement and genetic engineering. The outcome: a series of commissioned new plays about science for the twenty-first century. Theater as a clone of science, or artificially inseminated? Not to worry. Clearly, playwrights have been thinking originally about science, and will continue to do so, incentive or no, in deeply humanistic terms. "Let us dream of what life will be like for those who will come after us in 200–300 years," says a character in Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, a play written at the beginning of a previous century. Like that of the scientist, the playwright's imagination will always be full of wonder. ■

FILMS

Out of Africa

STUART KLAWANS

AFRICAN FILM FESTIVAL • BATTLEFIELD EARTH

Visiting Harare in 1993 on the occasion of a film festival, Djibril Diop Mambety was asked his name, his occupation and how he would like to be described. His reply to interviewer Rachel Rawlins: "My first name is Djibril. Djibril is Gabriel, like the angel. If I have to describe myself, I can say that I am just a history of a dream."

Apparently, the occupation that others might have called "filmmaking" was to Mambety an angelic practice. That, at any rate, was his ideal, as he dreamed of an African cinema that would reinvent filmmaking. ("We are perhaps poor in money but so rich by situation and hope.") If, back then, Mambety was a history of this dream, he is all the more so today, at the opening of New York's sixth annual African Film Festival. Born in Dakar, Senegal, in 1945, Mambety died in Paris in 1998. The subject of a retrospective in this year's festival (running at Lincoln Center's Walter Reade Theater through June 1, with selections repeated at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, June 3–11), his films give us some measure of what African cinema has so far achieved, and of how distant its dream might still be.

One of the keys to Mambety's vision may be found in his second feature, *Hyenas* (1992), a brilliantly imagined and vividly acted version of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's play *The Visit*. Not content with transferring the action to an impoverished town in Senegal, Mambety reconceived the play's central figure—a vengeful and immensely wealthy woman—as the embodiment of the World Bank. Not that you're forced to see her that way. Given all the strutting, preening, declaiming, wheedling, cadging, cajoling and scheming that fill the screen, mostly through the performances of a nonprofessional cast, you could lightly note the political allegory and then let it pass. But the allegory is there, all the same. The film "takes place in a poor city," Mambety commented, where the rich visitor tells people, "If you want money, one of you will have to be killed"—the same offer, he claimed, that was made to Africa by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. "They tell the African people, 'We know that you're poor, but you have too many people working, and you don't have enough money to pay them, so you have to kill some of them.... Kill enough people and we will give you money.'"

If this were all that *Hyenas* had to say, it would not be worthy of an angel. But even more grotesque than Mambety's rich visitor are her accomplices, the film's African citizens, who are wonderfully quick to swap a neighbor's life for soft drinks and television. "You know, Africans are also like the World Bank," Mambety told Rawlins. "Hyenas, please, hyenas."

You may discover the same moral vision, conveyed through the same brimming-with-life performances, in the other films in the festival's Mambety retrospective. His first feature, *Touki-Bouki* (1973), tells of two young people who want to go to France—"Africans sick with the idea of Europe"—who plan to pay the fare through crime. His last completed films are shorts: two of the three planned installments of *Tales of Little People*. *Le Franc* (1994) is the fable of a ne'er-do-well musician who wins the lottery, without in any way improving his life. *La Petite Vendeuse de Soleil* ("The Little Girl Who Sold the Sun," 1999) offers the more hopeful tale of a crippled girl in Dakar, who prefers the rough-and-tumble occupation of newspaper vendor to a life of begging.

And now, with those films as the standard, how do the others in this year's festival hold up?

Since another thirty pictures are on view, of which I've so far seen only a handful, my answer will be unfair. Nevertheless: Two of the most absorbing pictures I watched were works about Africans in the diaspora. They were Alain Gomis's *Tourbillons* ("Whirlwinds," 1999), a brief dramatic essay about a student in Paris who wonders whether to return to Senegal, and Theo Eshetu's *Blood Is Not Fresh Water* (1998), a wryly impressionistic travelogue, in which the filmmaker revisits Ethiopia through the guidance of his grandfather, the distinguished historian Ato Tekle Tsadik Mekuria.

It's time that we began seeing such pictures. Many of the filmmakers in sub-Saharan Africa have received both education and funding in Europe. Now some of these people are willing to own up to their ties to the North, even presenting their European experience as valid. The idea of Europe, in itself, may no longer make Africans sick. By extension, we're also seeing more self-reflexive films, such as Mahamat Saleh Haroun's *Bye bye, Africa* (1998), about an exiled Chadian filmmaker who returns home, and Jean-Pierre Békolo's *Aristotle's Plot* (1996), on the struggle of a high-minded African cinephile against the local fans of Hollywood.

The good news about this development

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is that it can be part of a Mambety-like complexity of vision, even in pictures that aren't self-reflexive (for example, Pierre Yameogo's 1998 *Silimande Tourbillon*, about a Lebanese family in Burkina Faso—unseen at press time, but a very good bet, to judge by his previous feature *Wendemi, Child of God*). Explicit self-consciousness can also counterbalance the tendency among certain other filmmakers toward the sentimental and faux-naïve: Moussa Touré's 1997 *TGV*, for example (an intellectually hollow strangers-on-a-bus movie), or Palesa Letlaka-Nkosi's insufferable short from 1997, *Mamlambo*. (Boy, a noble though glue-sniffing street urchin, meets girl, a tender-hearted Chinese prostitute. Boy loses girl. Boy hears his ancestors calling and turns into a big bird.)

Unfortunately, there's also a downside to the recent internationalization of African cinema. You can see it in a program titled *Short & Curlies*: five television-ready films from South Africa, each eleven minutes long, each produced with money from overseas. Only one of these pictures—Teboho Mahlatsi's *Portrait of a Young Man Drowning*—seemed to me to have an inner life. The others were variations, more or less slick, on the suspense film, written as if with a stopwatch in hand and directed from a film-school manual. You needn't long for the phantom of "authenticity" to recognize these as the mere ghosts of movies.

Given the political news from Africa these days, I won't put watered-down filmmaking too high on my list of concerns. But I won't let it drop off the list, either. As the best works in this year's festival show us, the great, world-transforming ambition of African cinema is still alive. Let's not forget which of the angels Mambety emulated: Gabriel, whose job is to call us to judgment.

In the press handout for *Battlefield Earth*—a Warner Bros. release directed by Roger Christian, based on L. Ron Hubbard's 1982 science-fiction novel—producer and star John Travolta declares that there's no connection between this fiction and Hubbard's Scientology. Maybe so. On the other hand, to perceive the slightest glimmer in this dreck would require nothing less than an act of faith.

In the year 3000, North American humanity has reverted to paleolithic conditions as the result of a dual oppression. Extraterrestrial uglies (led by Travolta) have conquered our planet, and priests have filled our heads with superstition. We are told that the technologically superior but thoroughly mortal aliens are demons and that those little twinkly lights in the sky are gods, who have abandoned us. We can do nothing but accept our fate and pray.

"No!" says valiant, chisel-featured Jonnie (Barry Pepper). Off he goes on a boy's own adventure, to free the minds of his fellow Earthlings and break the power of the uglies, known as Psychlos. A hell of a lot of glass gets shattered; a hell of a lot of rotten teeth are revealed, accompanied by rotten overacting. At the end, the Death Star (excuse me, Planet Psychlo) predictably blows up—at which event the preview audience of which I was a part failed to cheer, then grew aware of its silence and broke into uncontrollable giggles.

At this point, it occurred to me that *Battlefield Earth* has a lot in common with *Star Wars* on one side and with the Nation of Islam on the other. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad, too, preached an antisupernatural religion, in which Original Man was oppressed by his belief in "spooks" and flying saucers circled our planet. Unfortunately, the NOI made the mistake of recruiting in prisons rather than in Hollywood, and so we are unlikely to see a Warner Bros. epic based on *The Final Call*.

Screening Schedule: As we may judge from the use of the name Psychlos for the bad guys, L. Ron Hubbard and his followers have a low opinion of mainstream theories of the mind, including those formulated by Freud. Too bad. Psychoanalysis is full of the lifelike detail that's missing from Hubbardism, and it has inspired much better films than *Battlefield Earth*.

One of these, the 1977 *Young Dr. Freud*, is now having a brief run in New York at Film Forum, through May 30. Written by Georg Stefan Troller and directed by Axel Corti, it's distinguished by an exceptionally thorough reading of Freud's works, by highly accurate, on-location re-creations of Freud's world and by Karlheinz Hackl's performance in the title role. (He weighs each line of dialogue, as if speech required a perpetual inner struggle.)

Young Dr. Freud was one of two biopics that Troller and Corti made for Austrian television in the mid-seventies. For the other, *A Young Man From the Innviertel*, the filmmakers focused on Hitler, saying they wanted to sketch the early lives of the two most influential Austrians of the twentieth century. I have not had a chance to see the Hitler picture; but I ran across *Young Dr. Freud* while doing some research on the subject of psychoanalysis and film, and thought it was unusually good. Recommended. ■

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WASHINGTON COORDINATOR: EAST TIMOR ACTION NETWORK: Support the people of East Timor by monitoring, advising and challenging international and US government bodies, continuing ETAN's 8-year history of effective solidarity work. Requirements: Washington/lobbying experience; communications, research skills; *knowledge of East Timor/Indonesia. Field organizing,* administrative and fundraising positions likely to open soon. $20,000–$25,000, plus benefits. Contact Diane Farsetta, (608) 251-1730, diane@etan.org or jobs@etan.org.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: CENTER FOR RESPONSIBLE FUNDING, a Philadelphia-area nonprofit, seeks Executive Director. The Center provides leadership for philanthropic reform to increase funding for social and economic justice organizations. It designs and leads large workplace-giving campaigns. The ED coordinates multiple local campaign efforts and provides leadership for infrastructure development for progressive organizations. Direct résumés and references to Jean Hunt, Center for Responsible Funding, 924 Cherry St., 5th floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107; *e-mail MasHunt302@aol.com; fax (215) 848-6349.* No phone inquiries. CRF is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer.

ORGANIZING DIRECTOR: FIGHT FOR A FAIR ECONOMY and a real democracy. Experienced organizer sought to recruit members, develop leaders and build political power for Missoula New Party, a grassroots membership organization formed in 1993. Call (406) 549-8995 or e-mail mtnp@bigsky.net for details. Then mail cover letter and résumé to Missoula New Party, Box 8671, Missoula, MT 59807, or fax (406) 549-6346.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

ONE STOP IMMIGRATION AND EDUCATIONAL CENTER, INC. (OSIEC), a Los Angeles–based, nonprofit, immigrants' rights organization, is seeking an experienced Immigration Attorney. Duties include supervision, court representations and the chance to work in a vital human rights movement. English/Spanish fluency required. Annual salary of $40,000+. Fax cover letter and *résumé* to Elena Roschdi, (323) 268-4716.

DEMOCRACY SOUTH, A NETWORK OF PROGRESSIVE grassroots organizations building state-based, multiracial, multi-issue coalitions, is seeking an Associate Director with strong organizing, administrative and fundraising experience. Experience working with communities of color very important. E-mail demsouth@all4democracy.org for job description.

DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR to end death penalty. Nonprofit fundraising experience required. $27,500, + benefits. Send résumé, writing sample and references to Equal Justice USA, PO Box 5206, Hyattsville, MD 20782; fax (301) 864-2182; browse www.quixote.org/ej.

FUNDRAISER, HALF-TIME. Individual and foundation fundraising, and events coordination. Commitment to bicycling. Help diverse staff organize city youth while building community globally. $12,000–$15,000, benefits. Bikes Not Bombs, 59 Amory St. #103; Roxbury, MA 02119; call (617) 442-0004.

MEDIA DIRECTOR. THE INSTITUTE FOR POLICY STUDIES, the nation's largest progressive think tank, is seeking an experienced Media Director. Candidate must have BA/BS degree, minimum of 3 years in journalism and/or media relations, familiarity with US foreign policy and international trade, and excellent computer skills. Mail résumé, cover letter and references to Attn: Wendy Phipps, IPS, 733 15th St. NW, Ste. 1020, Washington, DC 20005, or fax (202) 387-7915. No calls please. Deadline: June 30.

LOOKING FOR A CHANGE? Do you support the arts, write well, love to learn and seek a nurturing work environment? *La Peña Gallery, a nonprofit Latino community-arts organization* in Austin, TX, is seeking applicants for Director, Program Coordinator/Accountant (Spanish a plus). Small risk, large rewards—give us a call: (512) 477-6007.

COMMUNITY/LABOR ORGANIZERS. Tenants and Workers Support Committee is hiring for African American and Latino/a–led school reform, childcare-worker organizing, health rights campaigns. $25,000–$29,000, based on experience, plus excellent benefits. Résumé and references (no calls please) to TWSC, Box 2327, Alexandria, VA 22301, or e-mail twsc@sigmanet.net.

POSITIONS WANTED

AMERICAN PROFESSOR IN MEXICO wants fall job teaching Spanish or ESL in college or academically strong high school. romaz@hotmail.com.

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Attach ad, typewritten if possible.

The Nation, Classified Department, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003

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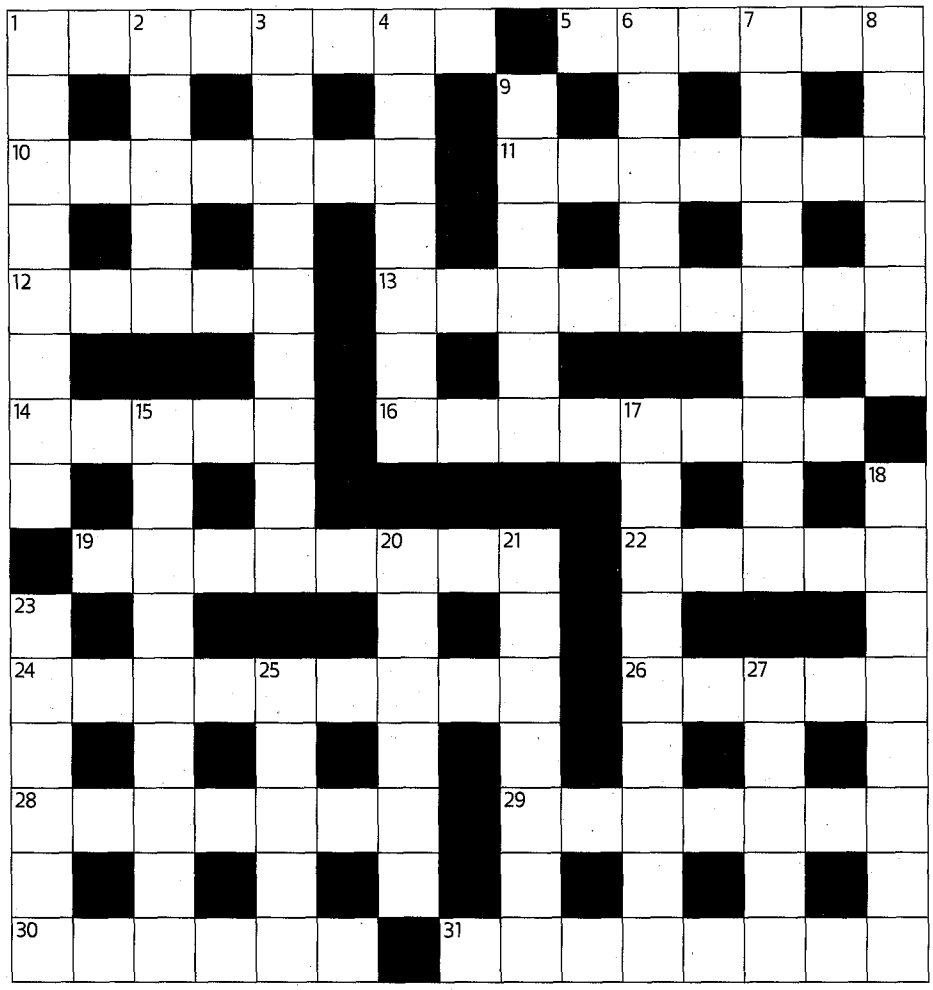
PUZZLE NO. 2756

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 and **5** Daytime account? (4,4,6)

10 Lamb possessed what made a movie you can listen to, but things are still in this. (7)

11 Such arrest is dangerous, though a funny fellow had the CIA confused. (7)

12 A welcome spot for the traveler, although there's nothing in the condition you found it. (5)

13 The one you write to when you put two and two together on certain legal things to look at. (9)

14 The way things follow a small type on a so-called sweet girl? (5)

16 A policeman so called might have kept you out of the service! (8)

19 It's an outrageous cost, the way people come down on Caledonia! (8)

22 Obviously the dance has spirit, to a degree! (5)

24 and **26** G and S followers will know he had a daughter-in-law-elect. (7,2,5)

28 Praise something when mine is around it—praise in any case. (7)

29 Likely behavior when a bounder meets a so-called pretty girl? (7)

30 and **31** This stamping implies the 13 was unknown. (6,2,6)

DOWN

1 and **23** down One would no longer be cool if one does—being sort of loose on the bird's home with the start of 24. (4,4,6)

2 One does this to papers, nails and tools for the locksmith. (5)

3 After twists, cried because such an area may look rather torn up. (4-5)

4 When they stop playing for a while, they put on a little show at this time. (You don't know this of it, as they say.) (3,4)

6 Perhaps eager to settle differences. (5)

7 Sort of toils in the middle of trouble—a cold drop being called for. (9)

8 and **18** Usually more military than the kind that sends up July 4th entertainment. (6,8)

9 Like Cajun food? You can thank the people that moved from here. (6)

15 "Fawn" might be what one thinks of, in considering one's usual behavior. (9)

17 Consider the call from the place from which one drives to find what a mind-maker-upper does early. (9)

18 See 8

20 Dined? It's about time one does when one takes a breather. (6)

21 In reality, acted of this, possibly. (2,5)

23 See 1 down

25 Bill might be attached on top of the horse like one. (5)

27 Worked like one did with the oars. (5)

PUZZLED? No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules" send for those of Mr. Lewis to: Puzzled, *The Nation*, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003, or access our Web site at www.thenation.com/print/hints.

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 2755

■	D	R	Y	B	A	T	T	E	R	I	E	S	■	■
A	■	I	■	A	■	O	■	I	■	N	■	W	■	A
L	I	O	N	C	U	B	■	G	U	F	F	A	W	S
L	■	T	■	K	■	E	■	H	■	A	■	N	■	H
F	E	A	S	T	■	A	R	T	E	M	I	S	I	A
O	■	C	■	A	■	T	■	■	■	Y	■	E	■	R
R	A	T	T	L	E	T	R	A	P	■	B	A	N	D
T	■	■	■	K	■	H	■	T	■	M	■	■	■	A
H	O	M	E	■	B	E	S	T	I	A	R	I	E	S
E	■	A	■	S	■	■	■	L	■	R	■	S	■	N
B	A	N	D	E	R	O	L	E	■	R	H	O	D	A
E	■	I	■	C	■	A	■	B	■	I	■	T	■	I
S	E	T	S	O	U	T	■	O	N	A	R	O	L	L
T	■	O	■	N	■	H	■	R	■	G	■	P	■	S
■	■	U	N	D	I	S	C	O	V	E	R	E	D	■

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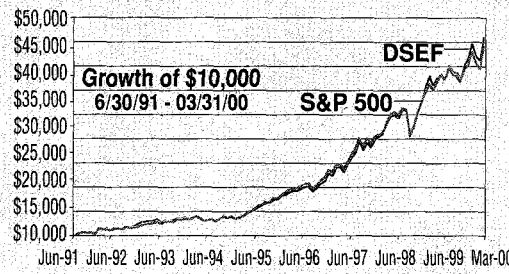

Avg. Annual Total Returns as of 3/31/00[1]	DSEF	S&P 500 Index
1 year	20.30%	17.94%
3 year	30.21%	27.39%
5 year	27.91%	26.75%
Since Inception (6/31/91)	19.55%	19.13%

Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Investment return and principal value will vary, and shares may be worth more or less than their original cost.

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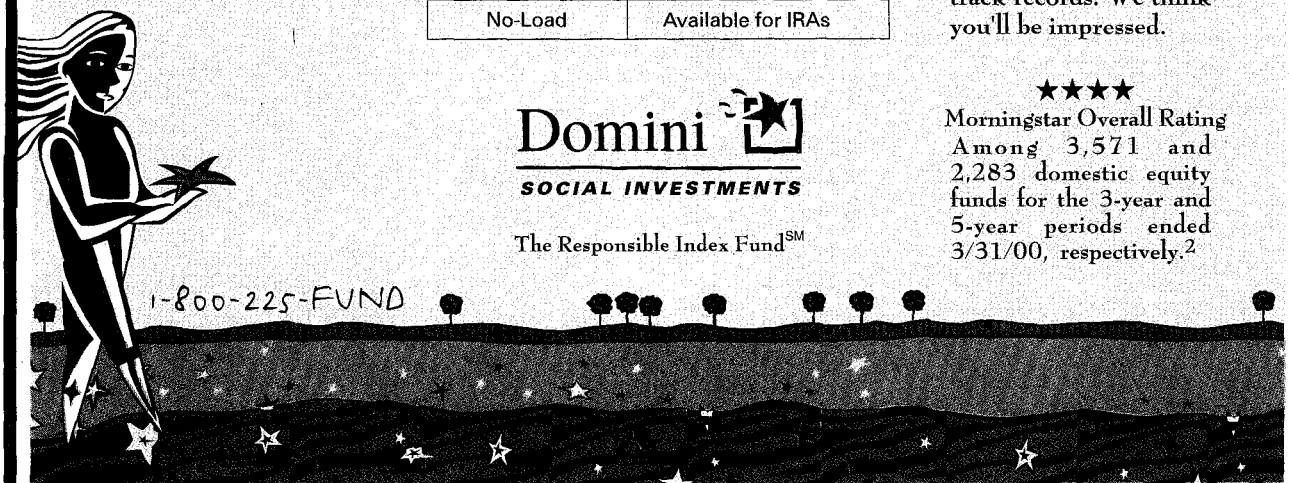

For more information including fees and expenses, call for a free prospectus. Please read it carefully before you invest. **1.** Total return figures are historical and include changes in share price, reinvestment of dividends and capital gains. The Fund waived certain fees during the period, without which returns would have been lower. The Standard & Poor's 500 Index is an unmanaged index in which direct investment cannot be made. **2.** Morningstar proprietary ratings are subject to change monthly and reflect historical risk-adjusted performance as of 3/31/00. They are calculated from the fund's 3- and 5-year average annual returns in excess of 90-day T-bill returns with appropriate fee adjustments, and a risk factor that reflects fund performance below 90-day T-bill returns. The Fund received four stars for the 3-year period and four stars for the 5-year period. The top ten percent of funds in their broad asset class receive five stars, the next 22.5% receive four stars and the next 35% receive three stars.

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